

OCTOBER 26, 1917.

No. 630.

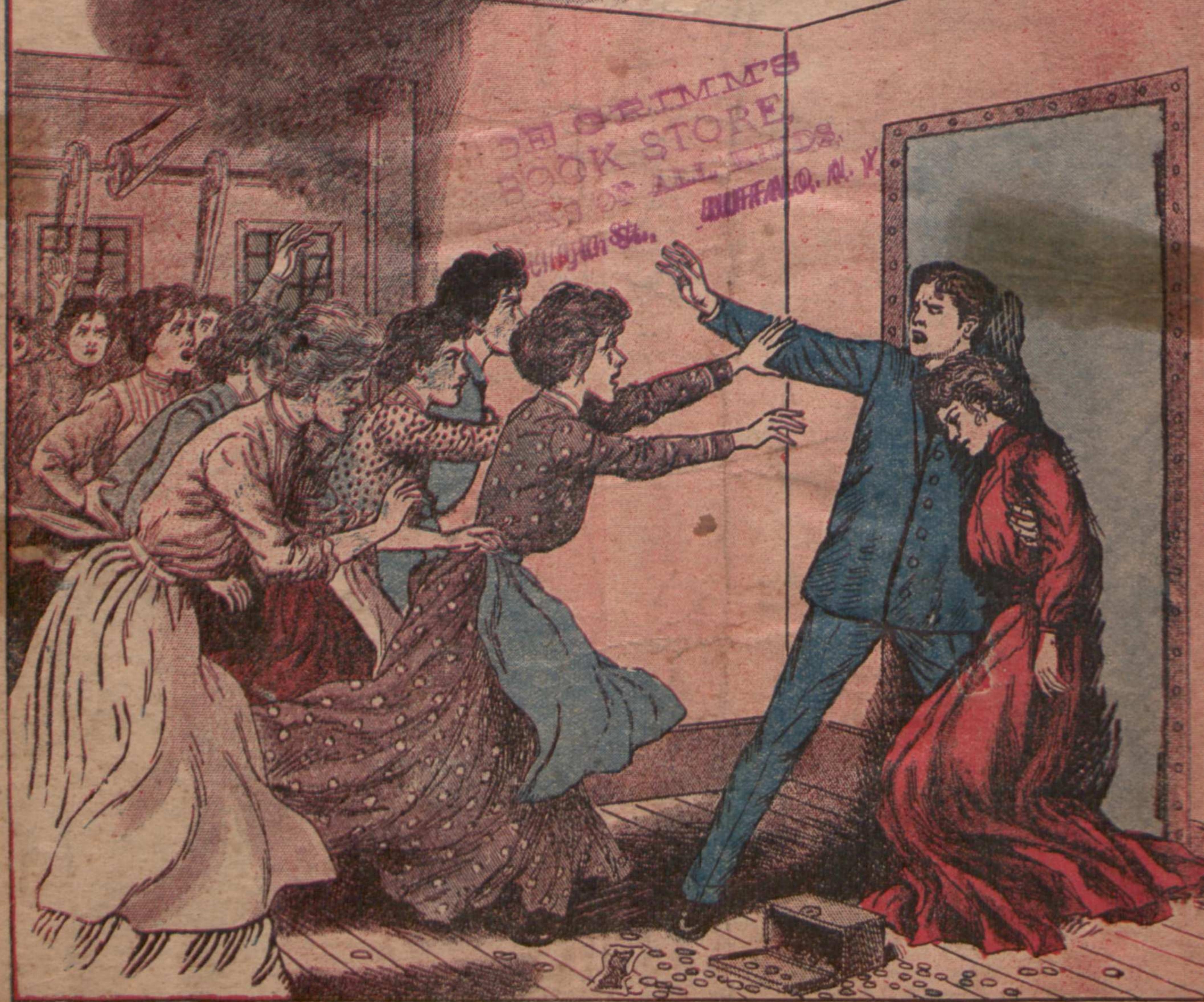
N. J. Keel
Old SIX Cents

FAME & FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF
BOYS THAT MAKE MONEY.

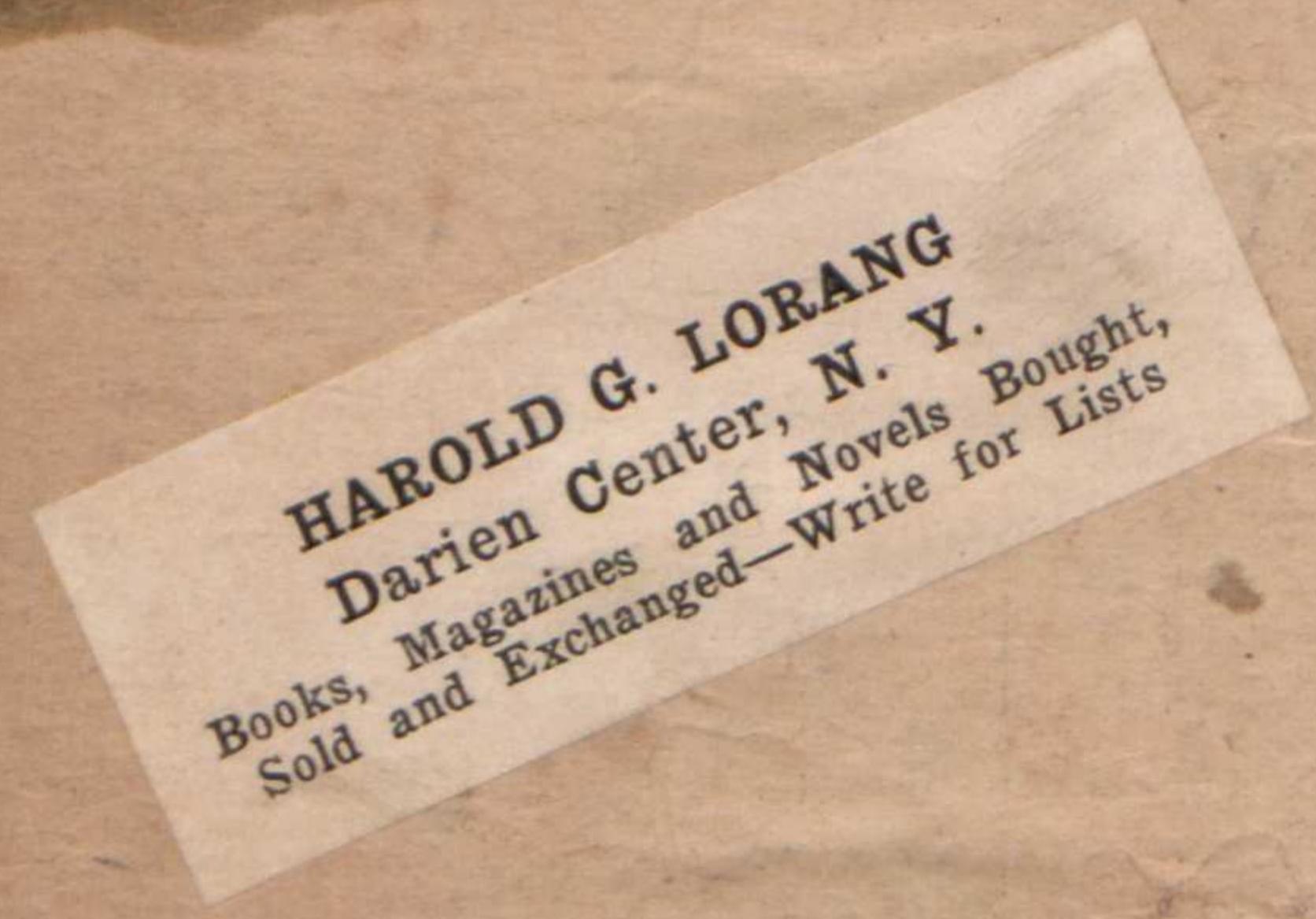
ONLY A FACTORY BOY;
OR, WINNING A NAME FOR HIMSELF.

BY A SELF-MADE MAN.
AND OTHER STORIES



"Back!" cried Will, in ringing tones, as he dropped the cash box and raised the fainting girl from the floor. "Back, all of you! There is no fire." The frightened girls, however, continued to press toward the closed elevator.

Fri. March 9. 1934.



FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

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No. 630.

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 26, 1917.

Price 6 Cents.

ONLY A FACTORY BOY

JOE GRIMM'S
BOOK STORE,
SELLING ALL KINDS,
325 Michigan St.
BUFFALO, N.Y.—OR—
WINNING A NAME FOR HIMSELF

By A SELF-MADE MAN.

Harold C. Lopeng
Serial Center,

N. Y.

CHAPTER I.

WHICH INTRODUCES THE HERO, HEROINE, AND OTHERS.

"Say, old man, is it true that you've been promoted to the office?" said Joe Rylance to his chum, Will Leggatt, a sturdy, good-looking boy of about his own age, as the two boys met at the gate of the Roanoke Knitting Mill a few minutes after the six o'clock whistle sounded announcing that work was over for the day.

"It's true, all right," replied Will with a glowing face. "Beginning with Monday, I am to take Harry Harper's place as time-keeper and general office assistant."

"Gee! You're lucky. I don't see how you got the job. You haven't any pull with the super or the company that I know of."

"Not the ghost of a pull."

"You're the most popular person in the mill, both with the men and the girls. Mr. Brown knows that, of course, so maybe that had something to do with your promotion."

"Possibly; but I wouldn't like to swear to it," laughed Will.

"Tell me how it came about."

"I was called into Mr. Brown's office this afternoon. That's unusual, you know. He never has anything to do with the hands unless some serious charge has been preferred against them. As I hadn't done anything to incur the censure of the foreman in my department I couldn't imagine what was in the wind. When I entered the super's office he told me in a brusque tone to take a seat alongside his desk. Then he put me through a kind of civil service examination, and wound up by offering me the job in the office. I was so astonished that I nearly had a fit."

"I should have had two fits if he'd offered me the job," laughed Joe. "Go on."

"I accepted the place and thanked him for it. He explained in a general way what my duties would be, and told me that I was to take instructions from the head book-keeper—"

"You mean Mr. Bacon, Jessie Bacon's father?"

"Yes."

"I guess that suits you to a T," smiled Joe.

"Yes, I like Mr. Bacon."

"But you like Jessie better," chuckled Joe.

"Cut it out, Joe. Well, I'm to report on Monday morning fifteen minutes before the hands arrive to keep tab on them."

"The girls will be tickled to death to have you as time-keeper, because if they happen to arrive late—"

"They'll be reported and docked as usual."

"You don't mean that."

"Yes, I do. I mean to do my duty. That's what I'm hired for. I always have done the right thing by the company, and I always will as long as I'm in its employ."

"Suppose I'm late, you'd overlook it, wouldn't you?"
"No. You'd have to take your medicine like the others. I shall play no favorites."

"I know one you'll favor, anyway," nodded Joe.

"Who is that?"

"Jessie Bacon."

Will shook his head.

"Where would I land if I favored her? She's never late, anyway."

"The girls won't do a thing to you if you shut any of them out after seven."

"Can't help it. During business hours I will represent the company, and there is no sentiment about a corporation."

"I know somebody who will be as mad as thunder when he hears you have secured Harper's place," said Joe with a chuckle.

"Who?"

"Percy Grant."

"Why?"

"Because he's been pulling wires to get the posish for himself ever since I've heard Harper was going to leave."

"That's the first I've heard about it. I thought he was too tony to work."

"Not if he can get a job to suit him. An office position is what he's looking for. He would like to get in the bank, but there is no opening. The factory office is the next best place to work up in the village. He told some of the boys that his father had spoken to the president of the mill and that he was sure of getting on in Harper's place."

"I'm afraid he'll be disappointed."

"Looks like it now. I don't see how you came to get it if the justice put in an application for his son. One would think you wouldn't have a show against Percy, for his father is a henchman of the political leader of the district."

"It does look odd that I should catch on, especially if Percy Grant was after it. With me it's a case of the job seeking me, not me the job."

"You've got it on your merits. I'll bet somebody has been speaking to the super in your favor."

"I don't know anybody who would take the trouble to do me that favor."

"Maybe Mr. Bacon did. You stand well with him, and he's head of the counting-room since Davenport left three months ago. He's in a position to reach Mr. Brown's ear. I'll bet nine dollars that's how you got the job."

"You may be right," replied Will thoughtfully. "Mr. Bacon always treats me nicely when I call at his house. I guess I'll be able to find out through Jessie."

At that moment the girls began coming out by twos and threes, chatting and laughing together.

Every one of them had a smile and friendly bow for Will Leggatt.

They all envied Jessie Bacon because Will was her steady company.

If Jessie hadn't made herself so popular with her companions the girls would have tried to make life miserable for her on Will's account.

She was a pretty, golden-haired girl, who always seemed to carry concentrated sunshine around with her.

Nothing ever put her out.

If any girl was taken suddenly ill in the mill, or was in trouble, she was the first, if circumstances permitted, to sympathize with and help her all she could.

There were thirty girls of all ages from twelve to twenty-five in the establishment, and the majority of them looked on Jessie almost as a sister.

She lived with her father and a maiden aunt, her mother being dead, in a little cottage on the cliffs just beyond the environs of Roanoke village, which was situated in a hollow within sound of the sea, and on the banks of a river that furnished the power to run the machinery of the knitting mill and other industries that made the village, though it was half a mile from the railroad station, a thriving place.

She had many admirers, as a matter of course.

Percy Grant, the well-dressed son of Stephen Grant, justice of the peace, lawyer and local politician, honored her with a while lot of attention, which, however, she did not seem to appreciate at the valuation that Percy put upon it, for, to his great disgust, she showed a decided preference for the society of Will Leggatt, who, in young Grant's estimation, was "only a factory boy."

Percy often came to the mill for the purpose of walking part of the way home with Jessie, but it was very seldom that he had the girl to himself.

Will Leggatt was usually very much in evidence, but owing to the fact that he had to go to the station for the late mailbag, for his uncle, Silas Scudder, with whom he lived, was postmaster and general storekeeper of the village, he was debarred from the pleasure of seeing Jessie even part of the way on her road home.

That is where Percy had the advantage of him with the girl, but it didn't count for much, as Jessie had no use for the village dude, and only tolerated him to avoid trouble, as he could make himself very disagreeable when thwarted.

As the girls began trooping out of the gate, happy that work was over for the day, Joe Rylance nudged Will and said:

"Here comes Percy Grant now, looking as if butter wouldn't melt in his mouth, which is a sure sign that he hasn't heard that he's dished out of the factory office job."

Will looked and saw his rival sauntering up with a self-satisfied smirk on his countenance, swinging a light cane with a sang-froid air.

Just then Jessie Bacon came out with a bunch of girls.

They clustered in front of Will and Joe and began to chatter to the boys like a lot of magpies.

Joe grabbed his own particular divinity, Gussie Sweet, by the arm and walked off with her.

"Aren't you just too rude for anything, Joe Rylance!" she exclaimed. "I had something particular to say to Will."

"Say it to me and I'll tell him."

"What a cheek! I will not."

"It will keep till to-morrow, then you can warble it in his ear. Just now I have something particular to say to you myself."

Gussie had to submit, and off they went together.

The other girls soon left Jessie and Will together.

"Good-afternoon, Miss Jessie," said Percy, coming up and ignoring Leggatt's presence. "May I have the honor of seeing you to your home?"

"If you wish to walk with my father and me I have no objection," she answered with very little encouragement in her tone.

"It will give me great pleasure to accompany you part of the way," he replied, devoutly wishing that her father had been obliged to work overtime, as he often had to do. "I hope soon to receive your congratulations, Miss Jessie," he added with a self-complacent air.

"About what?" she asked in surprise.

"I am going to take Harry Harper's place in the office here."

"I guess you don't mean that," she said.

"Yes, I do. I shall be time-keeper, you know, then, and if you should come late to work any morning I shall let you in and not say anything about it. Aren't you glad?"

"You must be joking, Mr. Grant. Harry Harper's place is already filled."

"Already filled!" gasped Percy. "Impossible! My father spoke to the president of the company for me, and he promised to consider my application."

"Mr. Brown, the superintendent, gave the place to Will Leggatt this afternoon."

Percy looked as if he was going to have a fit.

"You must be mistaken, Miss Jessie. A common factory boy wouldn't get the position ahead of me," he said, puffing out his chest consequentially.

"I don't consider Will Leggatt a common factory boy," flashed Jessie indignantly. "I think he's a most uncommon one. You ought to be more of a gentleman than to make such a slurring remark in his presence."

"Pardon me, Miss Jessie, I did not observe that the person to whom you refer was present," said Percy with a sneer, for he was furious at the defense the girl put up on behalf of his hated rival, as well as at the bare suggestion that Will had got the position he was after. "I thought he had sense enough to walk off when he saw a gentleman talking to you."

This second shot made Will hot under the collar.

"If you had any sense, Percy Grant, you wouldn't butt in where you're not wanted," he said in a pointed tone.

"Don't address me, you common loafer," snorted Percy, glaring at Leggatt.

"The term applies more to yourself than to me, for I never heard that you have done any work in your life," retorted Will angrily.

"How dare you call me a loafer? I've a great mind to chastise you for it," said Percy, raising his light cane in a threatening way.

The idea of dudish Percy Grant attempting to chastise Will Leggatt seemed so exceedingly amusing to Jessie that she burst into a merry peal of laughter.

Percy grew desperate at that.

He felt that unless he sustained his prestige he was lost.

So on the spur of the moment, and without calculating the consequences, he struck Will across the face with his cane, raising a livid mark on the flesh.

The factory boy couldn't stand for that.

Biff!

His right fist shot out and Percy caught a blow on the jaw that sent him spinning backward to the ground, where he landed with a shock that dazed him and sent his cane in one direction and his hat in another.

CHAPTER II.

DESCRIBES HOW WILL WHIPS HIS ENEMY, MEETS A STRANGER, AND IS ARRESTED FOR ASSAULT.

"Oh, Will!" cried Jessie in a sympathetic tone. "Did he hurt you much?"

"He hurt me as much as he could, confound him!" replied Leggatt, stepping forward and standing over Percy. "Get up and defend yourself, you coward! I'm not half through with you. You've left your mark on me, so I mean to return the favor."

Percy sat up in the dust and began to feel of his jaw in a tender way.

"I'll get square with you for that, you factory loafer!" he snarled.

"Get up, and get square with me. I'm waiting for you. If I don't polish you off in three shakes of a lamb's tail I'll let you kick me up and down Main street till you're tired."

"You'll regret striking me, you common store boy!"

"Anything else you can call me? Better say it while you're sitting down, for if you do it standing up I'll knock your putty face lopsided," said Will, whose face pained him so much that he was mad clear through and didn't mind what he said.

"Don't hit him again, Will," interposed Jessie. "He isn't worth it. I shall never speak to or notice him in any way again."

The girl's words aroused Percy to a pitch of vindictive passion.

He scrambled on his feet, snatched up a stone and threw it full at Will's head.

Fortunately, blinded by rage as he was, his aim was poor.

As it was the stone whizzed by Leggatt's head with a speed that made the boy gasp.

Had the missile landed on Will's forehead, as it might have done, he would have been knocked senseless instantly.

Jessie herself turned white at Will's narrow escape.

Leggatt had intended to comply with the girl's request and let Percy off without any further punishment, but this dastardly act was more than he could stand for.

He rushed at Percy, who took to his heels at once, like the coward he was.

Away they both went down the main street of the village as if engaged in a foot-race.

Percy was no match for Will in speed or anything else.

The gap between them closed rapidly, and two hundred yards from the factory Will nailed him.

Biff! Swat! Whack!

Percy went down with an eye that would be decorated on the morrow, and a nose that began to swell at once like a damaged oyster.

He lay in a heap blubbering like a little kid, for he had never been so roughly handled in his life before.

Will reached down, grabbed him by the collar of his jacket and yanked him on his feet.

Percy struck out blindly and landed one blow on Will's injured cheek.

Leggatt let go of him and soaked him good and hard in the jaw with both fists.

With a scream of pain and terror Percy fell all over himself.

"Help! Help! I'm being murdered!" he shouted at the top of his lungs.

Will gave him a contemptuous look and walked off down the street to the post-office, feeling only half satisfied with the satisfaction he had taken out of the dude.

Percy got up and leaned blubbering against a big oak tree for a few moments, and then started for home, determined to have Leggatt arrested and punished for assault.

"Hello! What's happened to you?" asked Silas Scudder when Will entered the store. "Been fightin'?"

The postmaster happened to be alone at the moment and he peered at his nephew through his old-fashioned horn spectacles.

He was a small, wizened specimen of humanity, about sixty years of age.

His locks were few, but what there was of them were iron gray.

His garments looked much the worse for constant wear, and were originally store clothes he had picked up at a bargain sale in the neighboring town of Exeter.

He carried on a profitable business at the store, and made his nephew pay for his board and clothes, besides getting many hours of work out of the boy in the course of a month which he promised to pay for but invariably neglected to do.

Sometimes when Will was short of funds he struck Mr. Scudder for a contribution, reminding him of unpaid balances, an account of which the boy kept in a memorandum book with an exactness that disconcerted the old man.

The postmaster came to time, but yielded very grudgingly.

Will often wondered what his uncle did with his money, for he spent as little of his profits as possible; but as the storekeeper never spoke about his private affairs to any one, the boy could only guess that he hoarded it up in the village bank.

This guess was not a good one.

Mr. Scudder had no confidence in banks, and particularly he did not want anybody in Roanoke to know that he had any spare funds, so he kept his money, and there was a good bit of it, too, in an old-fashioned strong-box in his bedroom, hidden under a dry-goods box covered with oilcloth that did duty as a table.

It gave him a great deal of satisfaction to think how foxy he was, and he never looked at the dry-goods box but he chuckled and rubbed his hands softly together.

"I can't say that I've been fighting, Uncle Silas," Will replied to Mr. Scudder's question. "Percy Grant struck me a cowardly blow in the face with his cane and I made him look and feel sicker than he's ever been in his life before."

The postmaster shook his head in a deprecating way.

"You may get into trouble over it. His father is the justice of the peace and a man of some importance in the village."

"I'm not afraid of his father. I've got a witness to prove that Percy assaulted me with his cane and afterward threw a stone at me which, had it hit me, would have landed me in

the graveyard most likely. He's a vindictive little beast, and I didn't give him more than half that he deserved," said Will in a determined tone. "But I've got to make tracks for the night mail. I suppose you've got the bag ready?"

As Will trundled his bicycle out from the back part of the store, Mr. Scudder tossed the mail-bag over the counter and started to wait on a customer that had just entered.

Will grabbed the bag and dragged it outside.

Throwing it across the front of the saddle he mounted the wheel and rode off, spurting down the street at a lively rate, for he knew he barely had time to catch the train if it was on time, which it generally was.

The train was just coming in sight as he dismounted on the platform of the station.

The Roanoke House bus and several wagons were also on hand.

Will carried the bag to the end of the platform, where the mail-car stopped, and waited.

The train rolled in, and the postal clerk tossed out a bag and took in the one Will handed him.

Only one passenger got off the train on this occasion.

He was a tall, well-built man of perhaps forty, with a dark, saturnine face that did not invite confidence.

As the train pulled out he stood looking after it.

He turned around as Will passed him, dragging the bag, and looked at the boy.

The factory boy didn't like the searching stare that the stranger favored him with.

"Hold on, boy," the dark-featured man said.

"What do you want?" asked Will.

"Do you live in Roanoke?"

"I do."

"What sort of place is it?"

"A good-sized village. It's half a mile from here. That bus will take you to the Roanoke House, on Main street."

"You're connected with the post-office, I believe?" said the stranger with a quick glance at the mail-bag.

"I am."

"Is your father the postmaster?"

"No. My uncle keeps the post-office and runs a general store."

"Your uncle, eh?" said the stranger. "Do you look after the mail, or does he?" he added carelessly.

"Mr. Scudder attends to the mail and the store, too. I work at the mill."

"Did you say your uncle's name was Scudder?"

"I did."

"Silas Scudder?" asked the man eagerly.

"Yes."

"A small man about sixty or thereabouts?"

"That's right. Do you know him?" asked Will, looking narrowly at the stranger, who, to say the truth, he did not fancy much.

"I think I have met him," replied the newcomer in an off-hand way, an exultant flash shooting from his eyes. "Might I ask your name?"

"Will Leggatt."

The stranger uttered a low whistle and favored the boy with a look of keen attention.

"By the way, I suppose you know most everybody in the village."

"Pretty nearly everybody."

"Know a man named Edward Bacon, who has a daughter called Jessie?"

"I do," replied Will, regarding the stranger with fresh interest.

"What's his business?"

"He's head bookkeeper at the Roanoke Knitting Mill."

"Whereabouts in the village does he live?"

"He doesn't live in the village. He has a cottage on the cliffs about a mile from the mill."

"I suppose his daughter keeps house for him?"

"No. She works at the mill. Mr. Bacon's sister is house-keeper."

"Does Mr. Bacon own the cottage?"

"No; he rents it from Squire Grant."

"You say you work at the mill?"

"Yes."

"Then I suppose whatever mail is directed to the mill you carry there?"

"The night mail I carry with me in the morning. The superintendent sends a messenger for the morning mail,"

replied Will, wondering what interest the stranger could have in the matter.

"Then I presume a letter addressed to Mr. Bacon would be delivered to him at the mill?"

"Of course."

"That's all. Here's a dollar for you."

The stranger shoved a bill into Will's hand and sprang into the bus, the driver of which had been patiently waiting for him.

"I wonder who he is?" muttered the factory boy, mounting his wheel as the bus drove off and taking the bag on before him. "Seems to know Mr. Scudder, all right, and appears to be interested in Mr. Bacon. He may be all right, but I don't like his face. I wish he hadn't given me the dollar. I don't care to be tipped as if I were a servant. However, it'll have to go this time, for I can't very well return it to him. I dare say I'll see him again. It's my opinion he's come down here to see Mr. Bacon. I wonder what about?"

When Will reached the store he threw the mail-bag on the counter, put his wheel away, and made a break for the room back of the store which served as a sitting-room and dining-room combined.

He was as hungry as a hunter, and wanted his supper as soon as he could get it.

Mrs. Watts, who kept house for Mr. Scudder, was eating her supper, and she was keeping Will's portion warm in the oven of the kitchen stove.

Will was a great favorite with her, and she saw to it that he never lost a meal if she could help it.

"Sit down, Will," she said, "and I will bring your supper in."

"Don't move, Mrs. Watts. I'll bring it in myself," replied the boy.

It didn't take him much more than a minute to transfer the dishes to the table, and then he set to with a keen appetite.

"How did you get that red mark across your face?" asked Mrs. Watts, observing the welt that Percy Grant's cane had raised.

Will explained the trouble, and told how he had served the justice's son out for it.

"You did just right," said the housekeeper promptly. "I hope it may be a lesson to him."

As Will pushed his chair back with a sigh of satisfaction, having eaten about everything in sight, Mr. Scudder opened the door leading from the store and called him.

Will obeyed the summons.

"Mr. Jones, the head constable, is here looking for you. I'm afraid you've got yourself in trouble for striking young Grant."

"Don't you worry about me, Uncle Silas. I'm ready to face the music for anything I do. If I'm arrested for slugging Percy I'll show him up in a way he won't like."

He went forward to meet the officer.

"Good-evening, Mr. Jones. I understand that you want to see me," he said.

"I do, Will; but my errand is not a pleasant one. I've got a warrant for your arrest, signed by the squire, charging you with a vicious assault on his son, Percy. I hope you will be able to justify yourself when I produce you at the squire's office in the morning. In the meantime it is my duty to put you in the lock-up over-night. You can avoid this by having your uncle go bail for your appearance."

Mr. Scudder, who stood near by, hastened to say that he owned no property, nor had money enough to qualify himself as security for his nephew.

The constable received his statement in surprise.

"The bail ought to be small," he said. "Surely, Mr. Scudder, you wouldn't let your nephew remain in the lock-up all night if you could prevent it?"

"But I can't prevent it," insisted the postmaster. "If my nephew gets himself into trouble he must suffer the consequences."

"I suppose I'll have to go to the lock-up," said Will in a tone of resignation, "since my uncle says he is unable to do anything for me."

Constable Jones favored Mr. Scudder with a half contemptuous look and told Will to follow him.

When they got outside he said:

"You shall occupy a spare bed at my house to-night, Will. I think it would be unfair to lock you up on a charge that will probably amount to nothing in the end. It was an outrage for the squire to insist that I serve the warrant to-

night when I could easily have found you in the morning at the mill. As I am responsible for your appearance in the morning, all you need do is to give me your word that you will not attempt to give me the slip, and I will take you to my house as my guest to-night."

"Certainly I'll give you my word, Mr. Jones. This charge is ridiculous. I shall call a witness at my examination in the morning who will make Percy Grant and his accusation look like thirty cents," replied the boy.

"I'm glad to hear it. You are considered one of the best boys in the village, and the news of your arrest will cause much surprise and comment."

On their way to the constable's home, which adjoined the lock-up, Will told his story of the trouble he had had with Percy Grant that evening, and the officer agreed that Jessie's testimony at his examination would knock the charge into a cocked hat.

Will spent a pleasant evening with Mr. Jones and his family, and when the hour for retiring came he was shown to a spare chamber and left to turn in at his pleasure.

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH SILAS SCUDDER HAS A VISITOR.

The departure of his nephew in the custody of the head constable of the village did not seem to worry Silas Scudder a whole lot.

One might have supposed that he had very little interest in the boy.

As a matter of fact, he liked Will as much as his nature would permit him to like any human being, but he liked his money better.

The very idea of letting any of it get away from him, even in the temporary shape of bail for Will's appearance next morning at the squire's office, gave him a chill.

He imagined something might happen to prevent him from getting it back.

After watching the constable and the boy disappear in the darkness he turned to a case of canned goods he was opening when the constable arrived, and bending over it began taking the tins out.

While he was thus engaged the door opened and the dark-featured stranger who had questioned Will Leggatt at the station walked in.

The postmaster, who was a bit deaf, did not hear the door open and close again, and therefore continued his occupation.

The man looked around and spied the storekeeper a few yards away.

After looking at him for a moment or two from head to foot he advanced and slapped him on the shoulder.

Mr. Scudder straightened up and glanced at his visitor, whom he at first took for a customer, but as their eyes met, and a sardonic smile wreathed the stranger's mouth, the postmaster gave a gasp of surprise and consternation.

"Curtis Jewell!" he ejaculated in a faltering tone.

"Yes, I'm Curtis Jewell. Aren't you tickled to death to see me? You look it, upon my word you do," chuckled the newcomer. "I suppose the Old Boy himself wouldn't have surprised you more—not so much perhaps, for when old friends meet, you know—"

Mr. Scudder made a deprecating gesture and looked helplessly at his visitor, whose unexpected appearance seemed to be a great shock to him.

"What's the matter, Silas? Why don't you say something? I suppose if you'd known I was coming you'd have had the fatted calf killed and waiting for me, eh, you old rascal?"

The speaker chuckled again and punched the postmaster playfully in the ribs.

Mr. Scudder sprang back as if he didn't appreciate that kind of fun.

"What brought you to Roanoke, and where have you been all these years?" he asked as soon as he found his voice.

"Business brought me here—business of the greatest importance," replied Jewell. "In reply to your other question I will say that I have been enjoying myself as a gentleman should since I last had the pleasure of seeing your physiognomy, which, as near as I can recall just now, was ten years ago in Salem."

"You look prosperous," said Mr. Scudder, noting Jewell's swell appearance.

"I am, after a fashion," replied his visitor.

"How did you learn I was in this village?"

"Quite accidentally, old pal. I met your nephew, Will Leggatt, at the station, and he told me that you had the honor of holding down the important and lucrative government position of postmaster of this place."

"You met him?" with a frightened look.

"I did. He's grown to be a fine lad. I should never have recognized him if he hadn't mentioned your name accidental like."

"You were speaking to him, then?" said the postmaster nervously.

"Sure, I was; but don't be afraid—I didn't say anything about you."

"I should hope not," replied Mr. Scudder, looking somewhat relieved.

"No, as long as you and I pull together I'm as mute as a mop-stick on the subject of Master Leggatt; but if you should try to cross me—"

"Why should I do that?" asked the postmaster hastily. "I haven't any hold on you."

"Quite right, Silas, you never said a truer word. The boot is on the other leg. It is I who have a hold on you," said Jewell with a chuckle.

"Hush, hush! Somebody might hear you," replied Mr. Scudder in a panic.

"Ha! ha! ha! You're as nervous as an old woman, Silas. Brace up, and hand me out the best cigar you have in the house. Don't be afraid. I'm going to pay you for it."

Mr. Scudder went behind the counter, opened a glass case and handed his visitor one cigar.

"What's to pay, Silas?" asked Jewell, putting his hand in his pocket.

"Nothing," mumbled the storekeeper.

"Nothing, eh? You're getting liberal in your old age. Well, seeing it's you, I'll let you stand treat. Hand me a match, Silas."

Jewell bit off the end of the cigar, lighted it and puffed away in silence for a moment or two as he leaned lightly on the edge of the glass case, in a negligent attitude, and gazed reflectively at a stuffed bird hanging in the window.

Mr. Scudder stood with both hands on the counter watching the man whose presence affected him with a nervous dread, and waiting for him to speak first.

"You must be pretty well fixed by this time, Silas," said Jewel, turning abruptly upon the postmaster.

"What do you mean?" quavered Mr. Scudder.

"You know what I mean, you old rascal. I'll bet you've a fat bank account."

"No, no; I haven't anything," gasped the storekeeper in a kind of blue funk.

"Suffering with the same old complaint, eh?" said Jewell with a sarcastic laugh. "I never knew you to admit that you had anything, even when that boy's father was sending you regular monthly remittances."

"Hush!" ejaculated Mr. Scudder, looking fearfully around the store, as if there was a listener hidden behind every bale, bag or barrel in the place. "Would you ruin me?"

The visitor chuckled at the old man's fright.

Indeed, he seemed to enjoy the misery he was inflicting on his old pal, as he sometimes called him.

"Ruin you, Silas! I could have done that long ago had I a mind to. I could have bled you, too. Made you come down handsomely. But I didn't. I was nursing something better—something much better than you, Silas."

"Eh?" said Mr. Scudder, putting his hand back of his ear.

"Deaf, are you? I always thought you put that on when money happened to be mentioned. I said I had something better to engage my attention than blackmailing you."

"Oh!" exclaimed the postmaster with a sudden show of interest. "What did you have?"

"My uncle."

"Your uncle! I didn't know that—"

"I had one, eh? Yes, fortunately I had, or I should have been compelled to fall back on you, and I'm afraid you'd have been but a poor substitute. Still, any port in a storm, Silas, so you can thank your stars that I had an uncle. Small good he would have done me, however, if his daughter—his only and favorite child—hadn't been self-willed enough to run away with and marry a chap that, in her father's estimation, didn't amount to shucks. He never got over the shock. He shut her out of his heart and home, and shut himself up in his magnificent house with his books

and his grinch for sole companions. Are you following me, Silas?"

The postmaster, with his hand behind his ear, in an attitude of strict attention, nodded, while his little bright eyes twinkled.

"After a time he got very lonesome, and having destroyed his will, it is probable he began to consider how he should dispose of his property, as he was wealthy, for he realized, like other rich men have, that he couldn't take his possessions to the next world with him, which is a very fortunate thing for heirs in general. Maybe you've been considering that important point yourself and have done the right thing by the boy—that is, drawn up a will in his favor leaving him everything of which you may die possessed."

"Don't talk about dying," said Mr. Scudder with a shudder. "I don't expect to die for a long time yet—a very long time."

"No, I s'pose not," replied Jewell ironically. "You expect to dry up and blow away some time in the dim and misty future. Then you'll make a nice seasoned bit of timber for the Old Boy to feed his furnaces with."

"Ugh! You give me the shivers. Why do you talk that way?"

"Because I like to make you feel happy, Silas," returned the visitor with a short laugh. "Well, as I was saying, my respected uncle, who had never honored me with a thought while his angel daughter was enthroned in his heart, suddenly recollecting your humble servant and sent for me to visit him. Did I accept the invitation? I should remark that I did. Bless you, Silas, I didn't hold anything against the old curmudgeon. I packed my grip and reached him by the first train. That will account for my sudden disappearance from Salem and you. I dare say you missed me dreadfully, and shed a few crocodile tears. Probably you took immediate advantage of my absence to pack up your worldly possessions and come down to this village, which is somewhat out of the way, with the boy. As you haven't heard from me in all these years, you have congratulated yourself on your foxiness in eluding me, little thinking that I have never given you a thought since I quitted Salem."

Jewell blew out a cloud of smoke and grinned sardonically at the postmaster.

At that moment the door opened and two men entered the store.

They wanted some smoking tobacco, and one of them asked if there was any mail for him.

Mr. Scudder supplied their wants, and then, after looking over a small bunch of letters in the "M" box, said there was no mail for the person who had made the inquiry.

The two villagers looked at Curtis Jewell and saw that he was a stranger.

They noticed his fashionable clothes and aristocratic bearing, and they went out wondering who he was, and what he was doing in Roanoke.

They also observed that he seemed to own the store.

CHAPTER IV.

TELLS OF THE BARGAIN THAT CURTIS JEWELL MADE WITH THE POSTMASTER.

As soon as Jewell and the postmaster were alone again the visitor continued his story.

"When I presented myself before my worthy relative he looked me over in a critical way, and then asked me a lot of questions about my past and present, as well as my aspirations for the future. As my record wasn't the best in the world, which is no news to you, Silas, I naturally had to gild it with a thick coat of fiction. Fortunately, my uncle did not seem to consider it necessary to verify my statements with the assistance of a detective, but accepted me at my own valuation, which you may well believe was as high as I could make it."

"It is unnecessary to go into further details, Silas. The old gentleman took a fancy to me, turned over the best suite of rooms in the mansion for my exclusive use, and after a certain lapse of time had his lawyer draw up a new will making me his sole heir and cutting his daughter off with a hundred dollars."

"A month ago he took to his bed. He lingered on till the other day, when he died. I saw to it that he was planted

with all the respect and style to which he was entitled by his wealth, and then—”

“Yes, yes,” said Mr. Scudder, leaning forward in his eagerness, “you took possession of the old gentleman’s property. Maybe he had an interest in the mill down here, and you came to Roanoke to look after—”

“Nothing of the sort,” replied Jewell shortly. “I simply made the unwelcome discovery, imparted to me by my uncle’s dried-up anatomy of a secretary, whom I never liked, that the old gentleman had made a new will just before he died, leaving all his wealth to his daughter, or, in the event of her death, her heirs, while to me he bequeathed only \$1,000, because some busybody, whom I suspect was the secretary, had informed him that I had been living the life of a high-roller, and was therefore unworthy of further consideration.”

“Then you’ve been turned out of your—”
“Say kicked out, Silas, for that is what it amounts to.”

“What are you goin’ to do now?”

“Try to get it back again.”

“How can you? You can’t get over the new will.”

“I think I can—with your help,” replied Jewell in a pointed tone.

“My help!” ejaculated Mr. Scudder in surprise. “How can I help you?”

“Listen and I will show you. My uncle’s daughter, my cousin, married a man named Edward Bacon.”

“Edward Bacon!” said the postmaster. “The name is familiar to me.”

“I found out that Mrs. Bacon died about five years ago, leaving a daughter twelve years of age,” said Jewell, paying no attention to Scudder’s interruption. “This daughter, who is now about seventeen, is the heir, through her mother, by virtue of the will, to all my uncle’s property. The old gentleman’s secretary, after some trouble, succeeded in locating Mr. Bacon and his daughter in this village.”

“This village! Ah!” ejaculated the postmaster, a light breaking in on his mind.

“Exactly, and has written a letter to Mr. Bacon advising him about the old gentleman’s death, and the fact that his daughter is the heir to a splendid property. Now, Silas, that letter must not reach Edward Bacon’s hands. I depend on you to prevent it.”

“How can I prevent him gettin’ it?”

“Don’t all letters have to pass through your hands before they reach those to whom they are addressed?”

Mr. Scudder nodded.

“Very well. What is simpler than for you to hold back this letter I mentioned? It will bear a Boston postmark and my uncle’s monogram on the back. When you see this letter, instead of sending it to the mill, where your nephew told me that Edward Bacon works, hand it to me. Understand?”

“Oh, I say, Jewell, that won’t do,” faltered Mr. Scudder.

“Why won’t it do?” demanded his visitor almost fiercely.

“Because tampering with the mails is a very serious thing.”

“Oh, it is?” sneered Jewell. “Is it more serious than robbing an orphan of the money left him by his father? You have deliberately robbed Will Leggatt of—”

“Hush, hush!” cried the postmaster, seizing Jewell by the arm. “Some one might hear you, and my reputation—”

“Your reputation!” chuckled Jewell. “Now look here, Scudder, you must help me, or by the Lord Harry I’ll tell that boy everything and show you up. This is a serious matter for me, and I won’t stand any fooling. If that letter reaches Edward Bacon my hopes will vanish up Salt River. Stand by me and I’ll stand by you. Mutual help it must be, or my ruin will mean yours as well. Is it a bargain or not?”

Jewell spoke with a fierceness that rattled Mr. Scudder.

In good truth he was afraid of Jewell in more ways than one, and so he faltered:

“Yes, yes; it is a bargain. And you promise not to say a word to Will Leggatt?”

“I promise. I care nothing about your villainy as long as my own plans succeed.”

“You can depend on me,” replied the storekeeper. “But,” he said, with sudden thought, “suppose the letter should be registered?”

“What of it?”

“I have to sign for all registered letters, and the paper goes back to the postoffice sending the same out. I am held responsible for the delivery to the right person of

those letters. I must either return those letters whence they came, or the cards accompanying them properly signed by the party to whom they are addressed. There is no alternative for me.”

“Don’t worry, Silas. If the letter is registered I’ll sign the card as Edward Bacon, and you can return it in the usual way.”

CHAPTER V.

HOW WILL LEGGATT IS TRIUMPHANTLY ACQUITTED.

Next morning Will Leggatt sent word by Constable Jones’ son to Foreman Stewart, head of the department in which he was employed, that he had been arrested for whipping Squire Grant’s son, Percy, the evening before, and would have to appear for examination that morning at the justice’s office.

The boy also carried a subpoena from the constable to Jessie Bacon, commanding her presence at the squire’s office at ten o’clock sharp to testify in the case of Grant vs. Leggatt.

Will breakfasted with Constable Jones and his family, and then the constable took him around to see Lawyer Blake, the squire’s business rival.

Mr. Blake heard Will’s story, and when he learned that it could be corroborated by Jessie Bacon, he consented to defend the boy free gratis.

The squire’s office was crowded with curious and interested villagers when the constable led Will in by a side door and placed a seat for him.

Jessie was already there, while Percy Grant sat near his pompous-looking father.

The squire immediately read the charge and asked Will if he was guilty or not guilty.

“Not guilty,” replied Will promptly in a clear tone.

“Take the witness chair, Percy,” said his father. “Hold the Bible in your hand. You swear that you will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?”

Percy kissed the book and told the story of his troubles in his own way, glossing over his own shortcomings and laying all the blame on Will.

The squire asked his son some questions, which he answered glibly, and the boy was about to leave the chair when Lawyer Blake got up and said:

“One moment, young man. Your honor,” he added, turning to the justice. “I appear in behalf of the defendant.”

Squire Grant looked surprised, but nodded curtly.

He and Lawyer Blake were not on the best of terms, and it was largely because the squire’s son was involved in the case that Mr. Blake undertook to defend Will for nothing.

“Isn’t it a fact, young man,” he said sharply to Percy, “that before a blow was struck between you and the defendant you grossly insulted him by calling him a common loafer?”

“No, it isn’t,” replied Percy skulkily.

“You deny that you applied such a name to the defendant? Remember, you are under oath.”

“I don’t remember doing so,” answered the dude with some reluctance.

“You don’t remember. Well, isn’t it a fact that before the defendant struck you with his fist you struck him across the face with your cane?”

Percy was silent.

“Answer me,” demanded Lawyer Blake in a tone that startled the boy into an admission of the fact. “That’s all. Is that the plaintiff’s case, your honor?”

The squire nodded as his son left the witness chair.

“Miss Bacon, will you take the chair?” said Lawyer Blake.

Jessie did so, somewhat embarrassed by the battery of eyes focussed on her.

She was sworn and then told the story of the trouble in front of the factory exactly as the reader knows it.

Lawyer Blake asked her one or two questions, and the justice, who acted in behalf of his son, tried his best to shake her testimony, but did not succeed.

Will was then called to the stand and told his own story down to the moment that he left Percy howling “Murder!” in the street.

The first part corresponded with Jessie’s story, and this went a long way toward establishing the truth of what hap-

pened after he chased Percy down the street and caught him.

The squire questioned him sharply about his second attack on Percy and Will answered him clearly and without fear of the consequences.

"Your honor," said Lawyer Blake, "that is our case. I think we have fully shown to your honor's satisfaction that my client was really the aggrieved party, and that the plaintiff deserved the punishment he received. I therefore move the discharge of the defendant."

As it was to his interest, politically, not to offend the villagers, the squire reluctantly dismissed the complaint and discharged Will from the custody of the constable.

The villagers applauded the squire's decision, and Will and Jessie accompanied Lawyer Blake outside, where the boy thanked him for his kindness in appearing in his behalf.

As it was after eleven, Will decided that it was unnecessary for him and Jessie to return to the mill until one o'clock, so he invited the girl to go to the store and have dinner with him when it was ready.

When they reached the post-office there were several persons in the store, one or two making purchases, the others apparently killing time.

Standing apart, with a bored air, Will recognized the dark-featured stranger he had met at the station the night before.

He glanced at the boy, whom he knew at once, and then at Jessie, whose beauty made quite an impression on him.

"Did you notice that well-dressed stranger near the door, Jessie?" asked Will.

"Yes. I wondered who he was," she replied.

"He came on last night's train. I was talking to him at the station. He seems to know my uncle. The particular reason why I called your attention to him is because he asked me a number of questions about your father."

"About my father?"

Will nodded.

"It struck me that he came to the village to see your father."

"What made you think so?"

"Because in the first place he asked me if I knew a man named Edward Bacon, who had a daughter Jessie."

"He did?" exclaimed the girl in some astonishment. "I can't imagine who this person can be who seems to know us."

"He asked your father's business, where you lived, and whether a letter addressed to Mr. Bacon would be delivered at the mill. He may have called on your father this morning, or if not he may do so this afternoon."

At that moment Mrs. Watts, who had been busy in the kitchen, came into the sitting-room, where Will and Jessie were talking, to set the table.

She bowed to the girl and then said:

"Why, Will, where were you all night, and where did you have your breakfast this morning?"

"Didn't Mr. Scudder tell you that I was arrested last evening for the trouble I had with Percy Grant?"

"No," she replied in surprise. "He never said anything about it. I asked him at breakfast where you were, but he made no reply. So you were actually arrested?"

"I was, and had to appear before the squire this morning, that's why Jessie and I are here. Jessie testified on my behalf and helped to get me off. I'll tell you the particulars during dinner."

In the meantime, after Will and Jessie passed through the store, Curtis Jewell asked Mr. Scudder, as soon as he was at liberty, who the young lady with his nephew was.

"That is Jessie Bacon, Edward Bacon's daughter," answered the postmaster. "She is your second cousin, and the heiress to your uncle's property," with a chuckle.

"The deuce you say! She's a mighty pretty girl."

The thought immediately occurred to Jewell that if his present plans went wrong it might be possible, in spite of the difference in their ages, for him to make up to the girl and marry her.

The coveted letter, from his late uncle's secretary, addressed to Edward Bacon, had come in the morning's mail, and the postmaster had turned it over to him.

He had read it, and was at first somewhat startled to learn that Caleb Jarley, the secretary, was coming to Roanoke with the will to hand it over to Mr. Bacon as the natural guardian of the young heiress.

On second thought he perceived the mistake that the secretary, in his simplicity, was making. Jarley should have taken the will to the late Horace

Goodwin's lawyer and turned it over to him to have probated in the proper court, which procedure would have completely blocked Curtis Jewell's little game.

Now Jewell saw his chance.

He was on the ground, and with the help of Silas Scudder, who was completely under his thumb, he figured that he ought to be able to concoct some safe plan by which he would be able to get the will away from old Caleb Jarley before he met Edward Bacon.

Once it was in his possession he would destroy it and then all he had to do was to produce the will his uncle had made nine years since, have it probated, and in due time take possession of Horace Goodwin's wealth.

Jewell lost no time in taking Mr. Scudder into his confidence, but the postmaster did not take kindly to his new scheme.

"Well, you've got to help me out," said Jewell in a threatening tone. "If my plans fail through any fault of yours you know what will happen to you. You will have to cough up half that boy's inheritance, or I will tell him all about your crooked business, and then you will lose it all."

"Oh, heavens!" groaned Mr. Scudder. "You wouldn't do that, Jewell."

"Wouldn't I? I'd do it so quick that it would make your head swim if you balk in this matter. My situation is too desperate to stand on ceremony with you, Scudder. Half measures will not do with me. You stood in with me the moment you handed me Bacon's letter. By doing that you committed a felony, and if it was brought to the attention of the Post-office Department you'd have a nice time trying to square yourself."

"But you made me do it," faltered Scudder.

"That fact wouldn't excuse you. I have also made myself amenable to the United States law by opening a letter not addressed to me. So you see we're both in the same boat, and must sink or swim together."

Mr. Scudder realized the predicament he was in, and had no further objection to make to anything advanced by the man who had him where the hair was short.

CHAPTER VI.

WILL MEETS A SECOND STRANGER AND HEARS A CRY FOR HELP.

Will and Jessie dined with Mrs. Watts, and then they returned to the factory together.

The news that Will Leggatt had been arrested for giving Percy Grant a whipping the night before, and that Jessie had been summoned to the squire's office as a witness in the case, soon circulated all over the mill, and aroused the most intense interest.

The girls said it was a shame, and some of the boys, particularly Joe Rylance, said that if Will Leggatt was punished they'd take the first chance to make it hot for Percy Grant.

Will and Jessie turned up smiling at the mill ten minutes before the whistle blew for the resumption of work.

"Gee! But I'm sorry I missed that scrap last night," said Joe Rylance. "I would have liked to have seen you put it over that stuck-up rooster. I guess he didn't get any more than was coming to him."

"I didn't give him half what he deserved," replied Will. "Why, he came within an ace of killing me with that stone. Nobody but a reckless little beast like him would have thrown a missile so viciously at such close quarters. It's a good thing for me that his aim was bad, for I hadn't the ghost of a show to avoid it."

"He thinks he owns the village," chipped in a boy named Dugan, "because his father has money and a political pull."

"I'm mighty glad that he didn't get the job he was after in the office. As time-keeper he would have lorded it over us in great shape," said Joe.

"He wouldn't have held it long," said Will. "He would have tried to make himself solid with the prettiest of the girls by favoring them, and that fact would soon have come to the ears of the superintendent. A time-keeper must be fair and impartial to all. That is what I intend to be as soon as I take hold, and I don't expect to lose any friends by it."

Next day was Saturday, and the mill closed down at five o'clock instead of six.

As Mr. Bacon had to remain in the office to clean up some extra work, Will walked home with Jessie, who told him that the stranger had not yet called on her father.

He left her at the door of the vine-clad cottage on the cliffs and started back for the village so as to have ample time to go for the night mail.

He reached the station ten minutes before train time.

Seated on a crate on the platform he noticed a bearded man, in a plain suit of clothes, with his soft hat pulled well down over his forehead, smoking a briar-root pipe.

Will wondered who he was, for he was sure he did not live in the neighborhood.

It struck him that there was something familiar about the stranger, as though he had seen him before, but he couldn't say what it was.

Will dragged his bag to the end of the platform and squatted down on it.

He watched the man on the crate out of the corner of his eye, not because he had any suspicion that there was anything wrong about him, but simply he couldn't help it and he had nothing better to do.

At length the whistle of the train sounded down the road and the locomotive came in sight.

The bearded man on the crate got up, put his pipe in his pocket and assumed an alert attitude.

With a rush and a grinding of airbrakes the train came up to the station and stopped.

Will tossed the bag to the mail clerk and received a duplicate.

This he dragged to his wheel.

A number of persons got off the train, several of whom started for the bus.

Last to alight was a little wizened-looking man of perhaps sixty.

He had a small grip in his hand and he looked around him in a puzzled way.

"Young man," he said to Will, "where is the village of Roanoke?"

"About half a mile down the road, sir," replied the boy.

"Will I have to walk there?"

"No. That bus will take you to the Roanoke House, on Main street."

"Thank you. You're connected with the post-office, I believe?"

"Yes."

"Then perhaps you could tell me whereabouts in the village Mr. Edward Bacon lives?"

"He doesn't live in the village, but about a mile outside on the cliffs," replied Will, surprised that a second stranger should interrogate him about Jessie's father.

"Thank you. I dare say I shall be able to find the place," said the old man, turning away and stepping into the bus.

He was followed by the bearded man who had sat on the crate.

This person had approached close to the spot where Will and the old man carried on their brief conversation and listened to what they said without appearing to do so.

"I wonder what's in the wind in relation to Mr. Bacon?" thought Will as he rode toward the village on his wheel. "Here are two men who have been inquiring about him within two days. The first one is hanging around our store as though he had a whole lot of business with Mr. Scudder, with whom he appears to be on very friendly terms, and he hasn't gone near Mr. Bacon yet. Now a second person arrives who clearly intimates that he intends to call on the Bacons. I should like to know what it all means. Looks as if there was something important on the tapis. I hope it may not result in Jessie and her father leaving Roanoke. I wouldn't like that for a cent. I'd miss Jessie the worst way. She's the only girl here I take any interest in. I would feel like a fish out of water if she and her father pulled up stakes and went somewhere else. I believe I'd light out myself and follow her."

There were a number of customers in the store when Will arrived with the mail.

After putting his wheel up he pitched in to help Mr. Scudder, who had to look after the mail at once, as several people were on hand waiting for expected letters and newspapers.

Half an hour later Will went in to supper.

While he was eating a messenger came from the Roanoke House with a letter for Mr. Scudder, who seemed anxious and nervous after reading it.

The factory hands held a dance on the last Saturday night of each month at the Town Hall, and Will invariably escorted Jessie there and afterward back to her home.

This Saturday was the last one of the month, and so when Will finished his supper he started upstairs to put on his best clothes and fix himself up.

While he was washing his face Mr. Scudder entered his room.

"You hain't goin' out, are you?" asked the storekeeper.

"Yes. I'm going to a dance at the hall," replied the boy.

"I'm goin' out on business, and I wanted you to look after the store," said Mr. Scudder crossly. "Can't you stay around till it's time to close up and then go to the dance?"

"I don't see how I can. I've got to go after Jessie Bacon. She'll expect me to show up not later than half-past seven."

"Humph! You're gal-struck, I s'pose. Goin' by the road, ain't you?"

"What other way is there?"

"I didn't know but you might take the short cut along the cliffs," he said. "It's jest like boys to run into danger jest for the fun of the thing."

"I'm not looking for trouble," replied Will, wondering why his uncle had made such a pointed mention of the short cut which ran by way of Storm Stone Rock, the highest point of the cliffs.

"I should hope not. I hain't got no money to throw away on an undertaker."

"Wouldn't you bury me if something happened to me?" grinned Will.

"I s'pose I'd have to. That's why I don't want nothin' to happen to you, 'cause funerals are expensive."

"If you knew you were going out to-night why didn't you ask Billy Bray to come back after supper?"

Billy Bray was Mr. Scudder's assistant in the store.

"I didn't know I was goin' out till a little while ago."

"Well, as soon as I'm dressed I'll go over to Bray's house and send him to look after the store while you're away. He can close up if you're not back by half-past eight."

"Well, don't forget to do it. I'm goin' out in about ten minutes, and Mrs. Watts'll have to look after the store till Billy comes over."

Thus speaking, the postmaster left Will's room and went to his own.

In about ten minutes Will heard him go downstairs and out by the kitchen door.

The young factory boy finished his toilet and entered the store, where he found Mrs. Watts waiting on a customer.

"I'm going after Billy Bray," said Will, "as I can't s'here myself."

When he reached Bray's home Billy was out somewhere and Will lost twenty minutes hunting him up.

Then he started for the Bacon cottage.

"I'm dead late," he muttered. "I'll have to take the short cut, anyway, even if I run the risk of furnishing the undertaker with a job. However, this won't be the first time I've gone around by Storm Rock, and I know every foot of the way as well by night as in the broad daylight."

So off he hustled by the path that ran close to the edge of the cliffs, the base of which was washed by the sleepless waters of the Atlantic Ocean.

By the time Will had got halfway he noticed by the thickening air that a fog was coming in.

As he didn't want to be caught in the clammy mist he hurried his steps.

He could hear the waves splashing and fretting on the rocks below.

The moaning wind swept in from the sea in chilly, intermittent gusts.

A dark blot against the sky ahead told him that he was approaching Storm Stone Rock.

As soon as he reached the base of the rock he knew that he would have to turn sharply to the left in order to avoid a deep precipitous gully that the storms of past ages had cut out of the cliff wall.

"I'll bet it will be quarter to eight by the time I reach the cottage," he said to himself. "Jessie will wonder what's keeping me, for I've always been on hand to the minute before."

He was close to the great rock now, and the air was growing more hazy every moment, while the roll call of the surf sounded both mournful and menacing.

Suddenly out of the darkness and mist ahead came a gasping cry for help—twice repeated.

CHAPTER VII.

DESCRIBES WHAT HAPPENED ON THE CLIFFS.

"Somebody's in trouble out here," breathed Will, not a little startled by the cry. "The cry came from the direction of the rift, and that's the most dangerous spot on these cliffs. I hope he hasn't fallen down there. If he has he'll be a subject for an inquest. I'll have to make my way there and see what's the matter."

As he started forward the cry was again wafted to him on the wings of the night wind, and Will thought he heard another voice also.

He passed around the base of Storm Stone Rock that was now almost swallowed up by the fog, and then advanced more cautiously, for he could see only a few feet ahead, and not very distinctly, at that.

"Hold him quiet, Silas," came a voice out of the mist that sounded familiar to his ear. "He squirms so I can't get the case from his pocket."

"I'm holdin' him the best I know how," came another voice that Will recognized with a thrill of surprise and mistrust as his uncle's.

"My gracious!" ejaculated Will. "What's going on here? That's Mr. Scudder's voice. There is some man with him, and they seem to be doing something to somebody. It can't be possible that my uncle is up to any crooked work, and yet—"

"Help!"

The cry, feebler than before, and in a choked voice, reached Will's ears again.

"There's surely something wrong going on," breathed the boy.

"What's the matter with you, Silas?" hissed the man with the familiar voice. "Why don't you choke the breath out of him? Somebody might happen along this way and hear him, then we'd be discovered, and the game would be up. Put your knee on the upper part of his chest and push his head back. That's it. There, I've got the case now. As soon as he's unconscious we'll carry him back a few yards and leave him. Then if he walks into that hole when he comes to it won't be our fault."

Will was now satisfied that a crime was being committed, and he determined, at any risk, to prevent it.

The fact that his uncle appeared to be one of the principals in the affair did not deter, but rather incited him to action.

He pushed forward and almost stumbled over the legs of a man lying on the ground held down by two others.

"Here, what does this mean?" he demanded in as stern a tone as he could assume.

One of the men, it was the person with the familiar voice, started up with a startled ejaculation.

Something dropped from his hand and struck the rocks with a ringing sound, then went clattering down into the rift.

He uttered an imprecation, while his companion, with a gasp of consternation, rose to his feet and rushed off into the darkness like a frightened fawn.

"I say, what does this mean?" demanded Will. "What have you been doing to this man?"

The boy and the man he addressed stood facing each other in the thick mist across the body of the unconscious victim.

Neither could make the other out with any degree of distinctness.

"What's that to you?" snarled the man with the familiar voice doggedly.

"It's a great deal to me. This man's cry for help brought me up. Have you murdered him?"

"No, we haven't; but I'll murder you if I hear of you breathing a word of what you've seen tonight. I know you now, young man, so you won't be able to escape me."

"You scoundrel!" cried Will, taking a match from his pocket. "I'll know you, too."

With a swift movement he lit the match.

As it flared up he thrust his arm forward and the blaze illuminated the stranger from head to foot for an instant and then went out.

His action had been so sudden that he achieved his object before the other could raise a finger to prevent him.

He recognized the man as the stranger he had seen sitting on the crate at the station that evening.

"Blame you!" cried the fellow fiercely. "You shall suffer for that."

He reached forward and caught Will by the arms.

In another moment they were locked together in a tight embrace and were struggling for the mastery on the very edge of the perilous rift.

Strong as the boy was, he was no match for the man he was opposed to.

The struggle was short, being brought to a speedy termination by Will tripping over a stone and going down heavily on the rocks with the man on top of him.

The shock deprived him of consciousness, and he lay still as the person in whose behalf he had interfered.

The man rose to his knees and waited for the boy to make a move, but he didn't.

"He's down and out for a while. Struck his head against a stone, I guess. Well, what shall I do now? That cowardly Scudder has made off and left me to face the consequences. The case containing the will has gone down into the rift—maybe to the bottom, where the seething waters will hide it from sight. If so I'm safe—the old man's property will be mine in spite of all the lawyers in the world. But I must make sure that it's gone for good, for I can't afford to take any chances. I can't investigate to-night in the fog and darkness, but I'll come around to-morrow and have a look. Now, what shall I do with old Jarley, and this young imp who butted in on us so inopportune? I can't leave them here, for they might fall into the rift when they come to, and I don't want blood upon my soul. Well, I can drag them to the rock yonder and leave them. Their future movements will then be on their own heads. That blamed young monkey worked that match on me quite cleverly. But with the disguise I assumed he never will be able to identify me as the man he spoke to at the station two nights ago. No, no; I'm safe enough on that score. I've played a risky game, but I fancy it is as good as won. If the case is at the foot of the rift it is won, and nothing will stand between me and luxury for the rest of my life. As for Scudder, the cowardly old villain, I've a great mind to put a spoke in his wheel. Maybe I will before I'm done with him."

Curtis Jewell, for the reader will readily recognize that the rascal was he, got up and dragged the body of Caleb Jarley to the foot of Storm Stone Rock, now lost in the fog.

Then he carried Will Leggatt from the edge of the rift and laid him beside the old secretary.

"Now good-night, my bucks, and may you find your way safely out of this when you come to your senses. By that time I expect to be enjoying a quiet cigar in my room, and dreaming of the good fortune that awaits me in Boston."

With those words he turned on his heel, and with great caution took his way over the rocks toward the village.

He hadn't gone very far before Will moved and presently sat up.

"Gee! I got a good bump on my head that time. The rascal is gone, I see. Took advantage of my knock-out to skip. Never mind, I'll know him when I see him again—if I ever do. As for Mr. Scudder, his presence here to-night, as the associate of that rascal in the commission of a crime—robbery, no doubt—is the greatest surprise of my life. I simply can't understand it. And he's my uncle. For that reason I suppose I'll have to keep mum and not let on that I recognized him. It won't be an easy matter for me to treat him as I've been accustomed to, for he'll never be the same person to me after to-night. Now I must look after the man whose cry for help brought me on the spot. Here he is alongside of me. He's moving, so he is doubtless coming to his senses. That's lucky, for it would be far from an easy job for me to have to carry him to the cottage, where Jessie must be in a terrible stew over my failure to show up."

Will raised the old secretary into a sitting posture and then struck a match to see if he could tell how badly injured he was.

As the match flared up and cast its flickering glow on Caleb Jarley's face Will uttered an exclamation of surprise.

He recognized the elderly stranger who had interrogated him at the station that evening about Edward Bacon.

"What in creation brought him out here on the cliffs? If he was bound for the Bacon cottage surely he would have been directed to take the road. Nobody in the village would send a stranger by the cliff path, particularly at night. Well, no doubt he'll be able to throw some light on the

matter when he regains his senses, which he seems to be doing now."

In a few minutes the old man began to mutter and talk as if to himself.

Will shook him.

"How do you feel?" he asked.

"Feel!" replied the old man. "I'm cold—very cold."

"Then get up and we'll walk along," said Will, assisting him on his feet.

The boy hooked his arm in the old man's and led him forward.

"What's your name?" he asked.

"My name? Yes, yes, I have a name, but I don't seem able to remember it."

"You don't remember it!" exclaimed Will in astonishment.

"No, everything seems to be in a haze. Did I get hurt? My head feels sore."

"Yes. You remember, I suppose, that you were attacked out here on the rocks, and—"

"Rocks! Rocks!" said the old man in a helpless tone. "What rocks?"

"You were knocked down by two men, one of whom was robbing you when I came up. You recollect that, of course," said Will.

"I don't know what you mean. My head seems all wrong. It hurts me."

Will wondered at the strangeness of the old man's replies. He seemed to be unable to collect his thoughts.

"You came here from Boston, didn't you?" asked Will.

"Boston!" repeated Caleb Jarley, as if the word struck a responsive chord. "Yes, yes; I know Boston. I know Boston. I—" and he rambled off into senseless mutterings.

"You came down here to Roanoke to see Edward Bacon," said Will.

"Yes, yes; Edward Bacon, Roanoke; brought will; it's in tin box; must be careful; if lost Curtis Jewell get everything, then make ducks and drakes with it; never do—never do."

Will wondered what he was talking about.

It struck the boy that the rough treatment the old man had received from the men who assaulted him had deranged his wits.

At any rate, his talk was very irrational and unintelligible.

The Bacon cottage, with lights shining from two of its windows, loomed up ahead.

Will asked the old man no further questions, for he found that he could not get satisfactory answers, but led him forward.

The poor fellow went along as submissively as a child, mumbling to himself all the while.

At length they reached the front door of the cottage, at which Will knocked loudly.

It was opened by Jessie, who was dressed in her best gown, and looked uncommonly sweet.

"Why, Will, how late you are!" she exclaimed.

Then her eyes filled with surprise as she noticed the boy's elderly companion.

"Sorry, Jessie, but I had a strenuous adventure on the cliffs. Where is your father? I am going to bring this old gentleman in. He's badly hurt, I'm afraid."

"Father's in the sitting-room. You can go right in."

She held the door open while Will assisted Caleb Jarley into the entry, then she followed them into the sitting-room.

Mr. Bacon looked up from the newspaper he was reading, said "Good-evening" to Will and looked inquiringly at the elderly stranger.

Will led the secretary to the sofa, where he sat down and stared around the small room like one in a dream.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT CALEB JARLEY SAID.

"Mr. Bacon, will you please see what you can do for this old gentleman?" said Will. "He was attacked by two men on the cliffs near Storm Stone Rock, and I guess he's badly injured. I came up and tried to save him, but got knocked out myself."

"Oh, Will! Are you hurt, too?" asked Jessie, noticing the boy's ruffled and somewhat soiled clothes, and coming forward anxiously.

"No; I'm all right. Don't worry about me. This old man here needs our services," replied Will.

Mr. Bacon asked for no further explanation, but hastened to aid the stranger.

He saw there was a big cut on his head where the blood had partially congealed.

"Call your aunt, Jessie. Tell her to bring some warm water, Castile soap and a soft rag or two. Then go to one of the small drawers in my bureau and fetch a piece of court-plaster you will find there. Bring your scissors also," said Mr. Bacon.

Jessie flew to do her father's bidding, and presently her aunt entered the sitting-room with the water, soap and rags, also a bottle of liniment.

Caleb Jarley offered no resistance to the good offices of the bookkeeper, who proceeded to bathe the wound and then cut some of the hair away from it.

It was a deep and nasty-looking cut, and appeared to have been inflicted by the sharp edge of a stone.

Mr. Bacon washed it with the liniment and then placed upon it a soft rag soaked with the same stuff, after which he bound the whole up with a bandage.

Will brushed the secretary's clothes as well as he could with a whisk broom, then a pillow was placed for the old man's head, and he was made as comfortable as possible.

He lay a while with closed eyes, and Will took the opportunity to tell all that had happened as far as he knew under the shadow of Storm Stone Rock.

He took care not to breathe a hint that would connect Silas Scudder with the affair, but said he would know the chief rascal anywhere if he came across him.

After a time Caleb Jarley opened his eyes and began talking and muttering in the same strange way that Will had noticed during the walk to the cottage.

"He seems to be off his perch," said Will. "That's the way he went on all the way from the cliffs. I asked him several questions, but he couldn't give a sensible answer to one. I am pretty sure that he came down here from Boston, and, further, that he came to Roanoke to see you, Mr. Bacon."

"To see me!" ejaculated the bookkeeper in surprise.

"Yes, I am positive of that. I met him at the station when he got off the train to-night. He asked me where you lived, and when I told him he said he guessed he would be able to find the cottage."

"Why, I never saw the man in my life," replied Mr. Bacon. "I wonder what he wants with me?"

"I couldn't say, but on the way over here from the cliffs I heard him mumbling something about a tin box that he had to be careful of, for if it was lost somebody named Curtis Jewell would get everything."

"Curtis Jewell!" exclaimed Mr. Bacon in astonishment. "Why, that is the name of my dead wife's cousin. He took my wife's place in—"

Mr. Bacon recollected himself and stopped suddenly.

No one in that neighborhood but himself, his sister and Jessie knew the facts connected with the bookkeeper's marriage with the Boston heiress who in consequence was disowned by her father, and her place in his home filled by his nephew, Curtis Jewell.

It was naturally a painful recollection for Mr. Bacon, who revered the memory of the woman who made such a great sacrifice for his sake.

"Then you know this Curtis Jewell?" said Will.

"Not personally, but I've heard of him," replied the bookkeeper in a constrained tone.

"This old man's visit here has evidently some connection with him, I judged from his rambling talk," said Will.

"Did this old gentleman tell you who he was?"

"No," replied the boy, shaking his head. "I asked him his name coming over here, but he couldn't remember it."

"Couldn't remember his name?" ejaculated Mr. Bacon.

"He doesn't seem able to recall anything except your name, Roanoke, Curtis Jewell, Boston, and the fact that he has a tin box in his possession that he must be careful of. He also said something about a will, I think."

"A will!" exclaimed the bookkeeper in a puzzled way.

Will nodded.

"Strange," said Mr. Bacon. "It can't be that—no, no, it isn't reasonable to suppose that Horace Goodwin—"

As the name passed his lips Caleb Jarley struggled up.

"Yes, yes, Horace Goodwin repented and did the right thing at last—at last," he cried in a trembling but earnest tone, looking vacantly at those present. "Poor child—poor

child! How she must have suffered! And she is dead—dead. If she had only lived to know that her father repented and yearned to see her again. If she had only lived—poor child! Poor child!"

The secretary seemed to forget what he was talking about, and recommenced his rambling talk and mutterings.

Mr. Bacon stared with a pale face at the old man.

Every word Caleb Jarley had uttered was intelligible to him.

Horace Goodwin was his wife's father, and from the old man's talk it appeared that he had repented of his treatment of his only child too late to receive her back in his arms.

But what did the old man mean by saying that Horace Goodwin had done the right thing at last?

Was his father-in-law dead, and had he added a codicil to his will leaving some of his property to his daughter or her heirs?

The probability of such a thing thrilled him through and through as he thought of Jessie, who was compelled to labor ten hours a day in the knitting factory to help keep the pot boiling at home.

"You say he mentioned a tin box?" he said, turning abruptly to Will.

"Yes."

"And I think you said something about a will," added the bookkeeper with a strange eagerness in his tone.

"I am not positive on that point, Mr. Bacon," replied the boy. "I am almost sure, though, that I heard him mention the word."

"You say he mentioned my name at the station, and said he was going to call on me?"

"That's right."

"Did he say anything else? Did he speak about Jessie?"

"No, not a word."

"What could have taken him out on the cliffs? If he was coming to see me to-night he would naturally have inquired the way, and anybody would have directed him to take the road."

"That is what puzzles me," said Will. "Looks as if those two men met him somewhere near or in the village, saw he was a stranger around here, and then after finding out where he was going offered to act as guides, and led him out along the cliff path with the object of robbing him."

"That must be the fact," replied Mr. Bacon. "Well, the question is, did they succeed in robbing him?"

"I'm afraid one of them did. He could easily have completed his work after he laid me out. The other man ran away the moment I appeared."

"Too bad; too bad," said the bookkeeper in an anxious tone. "The fellow may have taken the tin box from him."

"Now that you mention it, I am sure he had the box in his hand when I came up."

"He did?"

"Yes, but he must have dropped it, for I heard something rattle on the rocks as if it had fallen into the rift."

"If it went down into the rift it is gone forever."

"It may not have gone far, but lodged on a rocky shelf, in which case it could be recovered with the help of a rope."

"Well, you're not really sure that it was the case you heard. It might have been a knife that the rascal had been using to intimidate his victim. The blade striking on the rocks would have made a rattling sound," said Mr. Bacon.

"That's true," agreed Will.

"We'd better get the old man to bed up in our spare room," said the bookkeeper. "After that I think it would be well if you went for Dr. Ball and brought him out here. It must be that a splinter of bone is pressing on the man's brain. Certainly no ordinary wound would make him act the way he does. His memory seems completely befogged. From what has already transpired I suspect that the errand which brought him here from Boston is one of great importance to me and mine. We cannot know, however, unless we are able to learn the facts from his lips. Therefore, the sooner a doctor is called in to treat him the better."

"All right, sir; I'll go for Dr. Ball after I help you put the man to bed," said Will.

Caleb Jarley offered no objection when he was told he must go to bed.

Will took him by one arm and Mr. Bacon by the other, and led him up to the spare room which Jessie's aunt had prepared for his reception.

They undressed and put him to bed, and while the bookkeeper remained with him Will started to go for the doctor.

"No dance for us to-night, Jessie," he said to the girl when she accompanied him to the door.

"No, I suppose not," she answered with a rueful little smile. "You'll come back with Dr. Ball, won't you?"

"Sure, I will," he said, and then he went out into the night.

CHAPTER IX.

CONCERNING THE INTERVIEW BETWEEN WILL AND CURTIS JEWELL ON THE CLIFFS.

Will found Dr. Ball at home, told him the facts about the old man, and accompanied him to the Bacon cottage.

Caleb Jarley was lying with his eyes open, wide awake, but there was a vacant stare in them which indicated an impairment of his mental faculties.

"He hasn't said a word since you left, Will," said the bookkeeper.

Dr. Ball lost no time in examining the wound, which he pronounced a very serious one, but he could find no sign that a splinter of bone was pressing on the brain.

"It is very possible that he is suffering from a concussion of the brain," he said. "Although the wound is a severe one there is nothing about it that leads me to suppose that it is the cause of his present mental condition. Any idea how long he was unconscious?" he asked Will.

"I couldn't say exactly, but I don't think it was over half an hour."

"And he has been irrational ever since he came to his senses?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, the case, I'm bound to admit, puzzles me a little. He may recover his mental faculties at any moment, or it may be some time before he comes around."

"Any danger of his dying, doctor?" asked Mr. Bacon anxiously.

"No, I don't think there is, though his age is against him. He seems to have an unusual amount of vitality for a man of his years, and ought to pull out all right. He will have to be looked after, and should be kept in bed for the present. I will come out and see him in the morning."

Dr. Ball then took his leave.

Mr. Bacon remained with Caleb Jarley and Will went downstairs to talk with Jessie.

Their conversation at first related to the patient up-stairs.

"Your father told me that he examined the old man's clothes and found all his property apparently intact. He had on his person a pocketbook containing nearly fifty dollars, an old-fashioned but valuable watch, a pair of heavy gold sleeve buttons, and various other articles of minor value. All these things could easily have been taken from him by the two ruffians had their real object been plunder. The tin case that he was supposed to have is missing, however, so it is impossible to say whether he really had such an article about him. If he did have it, the chief ruffian carried it away, or it fell into the rift. It might have been the case and not a knife I heard rattling on the rocks."

On his way home that night Will could think of nothing else but the strange adventure on the cliffs.

He was sorely puzzled to account for his uncle being involved in such a criminal act.

Neither could he understand how Mr. Scudder came to be hand-in-glove with a man who was clearly a stranger in that locality.

Will was willing to swear that he had never met the man before that night, when he saw him perched on the crate at the station apparently waiting for some one.

And yet, for all that, there was something familiar about him and, above all, his voice was one he was sure he had heard before.

Who was he waiting for at the station?

Could it be that he was looking for the old man?

"By George!" ejaculated Will. "I'm beginning to think there is a deep mystery in this matter. Maybe that fellow knew all about the poor old man's errand down here and came on an earlier train to head him off. Maybe his sole object was to secure that tin box which seems to figure in the case. I recollect now that he followed the old man into the bus and sat beside him. Later on the old gentleman either started out to visit Mr. Bacon, or he was decoyed from the hotel to the cliffs. My reasoning may be all right in its way, but it fails to throw any light on the very important circumstance of Mr.

Scudder being mixed up in the affair. As long as I can recollect my uncle has never before shown a crooked streak. He is close-fisted, and whenever I have asked him questions about my father he has shut me up short and sweet, but otherwise I can't find any fault with him. Of course he recognized me when I came on the scene to-night, and this probably accounts for him skipping off so quickly, leaving his companion and me to fight it out between ourselves. He's bound to show a certain amount of nervousness when we meet to-morrow, for he isn't sure that I didn't recognize him even in the fog. However, I don't mean to let him know, for the present, at any rate, that I'm on to him. I must put Constable Jones wise to the other man. We'll go to Squire Grant's house together and get a warrant for his arrest. If he doesn't leave by the morning train there is a chance that the constable may catch him. After I have attended to that matter I'll go over to the rift and see if there is any sign there of the tin case. Mr. Bacon seems much interested in it. At any rate, it strikes me that it is at the bottom of the whole trouble."

By the time Will had reached this point of his soliloquy he was within a few yards of the store.

He had a key to the back door, and letting himself in, he pulled off his shoes and went quietly to his room.

He slept soundly until Mrs. Watts called him to breakfast.

Mr. Scudder did not put in an appearance at the meal, and as soon as Will got through he went over to Constable Jones' house.

He told the constable all the particulars of the affair on the cliffs, without implicating his uncle, and the officer agreed that a warrant ought to be issued for the unknown rascal.

Accordingly they went to the justice's house, where Will repeated his narrative, and Squire Grant issued the document empowering the constable to arrest the man on sight and put him in the lock-up.

It was close on to eleven o'clock when Will took the cliff path for the rift.

When Will rounded Storm Stone Rock and came in sight of the rift, a dozen yards away, he was surprised to see a tall, well-dressed man on the scene, peering down into the chasm.

He recognized him at once as the stranger who had talked to him at the station, and who seemed to be on familiar terms with his uncle.

The man had now been three days in Roanoke, and Will wondered what business had brought him there.

He had certainly not called on Mr. Bacon, though his pertinent inquiries about the bookkeeper had given the boy the idea that he had business with Jessie's father.

The reader, however, knows that this man was Curtis Jewell.

The sound of Will's footsteps attracted Jewell's attention and he looked around.

"Ah, my young friend," he said with a sinister smile, "we meet again."

Like a flash Will recognized his voice as identical with the tones of the man connected with last night's adventure, and he looked at him sharply.

He knew now why the rascal's voice had seemed familiar to him.

"I see we do," he replied rather coldly to Jewell's remark.

"Are you out for a morning's walk along the cliffs?" asked the man curiously.

"You seem to be taking in the cliffs yourself," replied Will. "Have you called on Mr. Bacon yet?"

"Why do you ask that?" said Jewell sharply.

"Because you made so many inquiries about him at the station the evening you reached here that I supposed you had business with him."

"You needn't worry about my business relations with Mr. Bacon."

"I'm not worrying about the matter," replied Will indifferently.

At the same time he was covertly sizing this man up, for a suspicion had entered his head that this elegant-looking person and the rough-looking man of the previous night might possibly be the same individual.

The suspicion gained strength every moment from the fact that the two were of the same height and build, and this man was on familiar terms with Mr. Scudder.

"I hope you'll know me when you see me again," said Jewell sarcastically.

"I guess I will," replied Will with a slight laugh. "By the way, have you known Mr. Scudder long?"

"What is that to you, young man?"

"Nothing."

"Then why did you ask?"

"Merely out of curiosity."

"May I ask how long have you known Mr. Scudder yourself?" Jewell asked with a sardonic look.

"Ever since I can remember—almost."

"Has he treated you well?"

"I haven't any particular fault to find with him."

"Have you ever asked him about your father?"

"Does that fact interest you?"

"Nothing to speak of; but I should think it would interest you," he said with some emphasis.

"Why did you ask me that question? Don't you suppose my uncle would tell me anything he knew about my father?"

"Did you ever read the story of the 'Babes in the Wood?'" chuckled Jewell.

"I can't say that I have."

"Then I advise you to read it and ponder over it."

"Why?"

"The babes had an uncle, and so have you."

"What of it?"

"There's a whole lot about it if you can only grasp the point."

"I'd like to know what you are trying to get at."

"They say a nod is as good as a wink to a blind horse: Well, you're the blind horse, and I'm giving you a nod, or a wink or—a hint, if you can understand that better. Follow it up and see what you can make out of it; but before you begin, read about the babes and their foxy old uncle, and after you've read the story think it over. There's been more than one foxy old uncle in this world, and more than one babe who got left in the shuffle. Just mark that fact down in big letters and put it in your hat, Will Leggatt."

With an irritating laugh, Curtis Jewell turned on his heel and walked away, leaving Will greatly mystified by his concluding words.

CHAPTER X.

HOW JESSIE GIVES WILL FOOD FOR THOUGHT.

"I wonder what he was aiming at?" muttered Will, following the aristocratic figure of Curtis Jewell with his eyes till he vanished around Storm Stone Rock. "He put a whole lot of stress on the word uncle. He said there was more than one foxy old uncle in the world, and more than one babe that got left in the shuffle. It strikes me that he was hitting at Mr. Scudder. Well, after last night's experience with my uncle I'm willing to believe that he is uncommonly foxy. If this chap imagines that I am one of the babes that is going to get left in the shuffle, all I can say is that his opinion doesn't cut much ice with me. I'm not going to get left in this world if I can help myself—not as long as I've got health and strength to hustle."

"Hello, Will!"

A girlish voice came floating through the air toward him. He easily recognized the tones as Jessie's.

Turning, he saw her coming toward him from the direction of her home.

He waved his arm and waited for her to come up.

"How is the old gentleman this morning?" he asked.

"About the same. He is as submissive as a child, and acts like one. He looks wonderingly around, as if he couldn't understand the condition of things, but he does not say anything, or make the slightest complaint. My father thinks that he came down here on a very important mission to—"

She stopped abruptly and looked a little bit confused.

Will saw that she had some reason for not wishing to finish what she started to say, so in order to put her at her ease he abruptly changed the subject.

"Did you ever read the story of the 'Babes in the Wood,' Jessie?" he asked.

"Why, of course I did, when I was a little girl."

"Do you remember anything about it?"

"I remember that I was very much interested in the fate of the two babes."

"What happened to them?"

"They got lost in a deep, dark wood, then they fell asleep in each other's arms and died, and the birds came and covered them with leaves."

"The birds did?" grinned Will.

"So the story stated. It was a very sad little story, and I remember that I cried over it."

"Did they have a foxy old uncle?"

"Did they? They had a villainous old uncle. He wanted their property."

"What property?"

"The property left them by their father."

"Did he get it?"

"I guess he did. He hired two rascals to take the babes into the wood and kill them. The men quarreled and came to blows, and while they were at it the babes wandered away and got lost."

"Is that the whole story?"

"Yes."

Will scratched his head and wondered where the point was that Curtis Jewell suggested that he should think over.

The man's remark struck him as so odd that he thought he'd repeat them to Jessie.

So he told the girl that when he came over there to take a look down into the rift to see if the tin box was anywhere in sight he found the well-dressed stranger there who had inquired about her father of him at the station.

"He was looking down the rift too, when I came up. As soon as he heard me he turned and spoke to me. I told you last night that the voice of one of the men who attacked the old man had a familiar ring. I couldn't recall where I had heard it before. Well, I know now. The well-dressed stranger has the same voice."

"Do you suspect then that he—"

"Well, between you and I, I have a suspicion that there is a connection between the two men. They agree in height and build also. If last night's ruffian was really the well-dressed stranger, his disguise was first-class. I never could identify him under oath."

"You must tell father about this. He may be able to suggest some way of finding out the truth."

"I will. Now I want to tell you about the conversation this man and I had just before you showed up. He's only been gone about fifteen minutes."

Will repeated, as near as he could remember, what Curtis Jewell said to him with reference to his uncle, Silas Scudder, dwelling particularly on the man's ambiguous allusion to the foxy old uncle of the "Babes in the Wood."

"He advised me to read the story and ponder over it. He said there was more than one foxy old uncle in the world, and more than one babe who got left in the shuffle, and advised me to put the fact in big letters in my hat. He also said that a nod was as good as a wink to a blind horse. That I was the blind horse, and he was giving me a wink or a hint. Now what do you suppose he was getting at? Trying to make me think that my uncle was playing me for a fool?"

"That is what it looks like," answered Jessie.

"But my uncle isn't playing me for a fool," said Will in a positive tone. "He may be getting a certain amount of service from me for which he doesn't pay, but that isn't anything, seeing that he raised me from a little boy ever since my father went West and died out there. Only for Mr. Scudder I probably would have been sent to a poor farm as a friendless little orphan."

"Then your father was poor when he left you in Mr. Scudder's charge?" said Jessie.

"I suppose he must have been."

"You only suppose? Why, Will, haven't you spoken to Mr. Scudder about your father?"

"I have tried to, but he never seemed to want to go into the details I asked him for."

"Why not?"

"He was averse to speaking about my father. I have an idea they didn't pull well together."

"What did you learn from him?"

"That my father, after meeting with financial reverses, went out West somewhere to see if he could make a fortune, leaving me in his care. That after an absence of a couple of years my father was stricken with a fever among the mountains and died."

"Is that all Mr. Scudder could tell you?"

"That's all he did tell me."

"When Mr. Scudder heard of the death of your father surely he must have written to the place where he died to find out the particulars, and whether he left any money or other property, which it naturally was his duty to take charge of in your interest."

"If he did he never told me anything about it."

"Did you ever ask for the facts of your father's death, and whether he left any property after him?"

"I have. All I could get out of Mr. Scudder was that my father died of a mountain fever, and that he didn't leave anything at all."

"If he told you that I suppose it must be so. Do you know where your father died?"

"Somewhere in Colorado."

"Didn't Mr. Scudder tell you the place?"

"He told me that he couldn't remember. It was out in the mountains."

"How would he have learned of your father's death unless somebody out there had sent him word? How would he have known that your father left nothing unless he had made inquiries, and how could he have made inquiries unless he knew where to write?"

"That's right," nodded Will; "but he must have lost track of the place afterward. A good many years elapsed since my father's death before I was old enough to think of asking my uncle about the facts."

"Well, I suppose there is no reason why your uncle should wish to conceal anything about your father from you," said Jessie.

"I don't know of any."

"You told me that this well-dressed stranger who made the inquiries about my father is on very friendly terms with Mr. Scudder?"

"He seems to be."

"You have lived with Mr. Scudder nearly all your life. Have you ever seen this man before?"

"Never to my knowledge."

"Then he must have known your uncle many years ago."

"It looks that way," admitted Will.

"Did you ask Mr. Scudder who he was?"

"I did. All he would tell me was that he was a gentleman from Boston who was looking over the neighborhood with the view of establishing a factory here."

"It is singular how he knows my father's name, unless he met somebody in Boston from here who told him. It may have been his original intention to talk to my father on the subject of the factory and then changed his mind."

"That's true. However, I should think he would spend his time making inquiries of the factory superintendents and others well informed on that subject than to be hanging around the store. Mrs. Watts told me that he has spent the better part of the two days he's been in the village at the store in conversation with Mr. Scudder. She made the singular remark that my uncle seems to be afraid of him."

"Afraid of him!" ejaculated Jessie in surprise. "Why should he be?"

"Ask me something easier, Jessie, and maybe I'll be able to answer you," laughed Will.

"It is funny he should ask you if Mr. Scudder treated you well, and if you had ever asked your uncle about your father. How did he say it?"

"In a rather pointed way. When I asked him if he didn't suppose Mr. Scudder would tell me all he knew he sprang his remark about the 'Babes in the Wood' on me, advising me to read the story and ponder over it because the babes had an uncle and so had I."

"That was as much as to hint that Mr. Scudder was as wicked and treacherous toward you as was the uncle to the babes. Why should he say that unless—"

"Unless what?"

"He knows something about your uncle that's hidden from you."

Will looked at Jessie in a blank kind of a way.

"He told you to ponder over the story of the babes," she added.

"Yes. He said there was a whole lot about it if I could only grasp the point."

"The point of the story is that the father of the babes left them a lot of property, and the wicked uncle conspired to defraud them out of it. This man clearly insinuated that your father left you money or other property and that your uncle has treated you like the babes were treated by their uncle."

"Great Scott, Jessie!" gasped Will. "Do you really think that is what he meant?"

"That is certainly what his words suggest."

"But if my father really left me anything, why should Mr. Scudder conceal the fact? It wouldn't be a fair deal to me."

"Of course it wouldn't, but there are persons in this world who will stop at nothing to make money. When they are found out you read about their rascality in the newspapers. When they are not found out their victims suffer the fate of the 'Babes in the Wood'—that is, they never learn the truth, and the wicked prosper."

"But Mr. Scudder claims to be worth very little. If my father had left quite a sum of money, and my uncle had kept it, he wouldn't need to run a country store and wear cheap clothes. I should think he would have gone to the city long ago and lived on his ill-gotten gains."

"Mr. Scudder doesn't look to me like a man who enjoys spending money. My father says that he must make a good profit out of the store, not to speak of his salary as postmaster. It is common gossip in the village that your uncle spends as little as possible, and hoards up the rest. The general impression is that he's a miser. If your father left you any money, and he got possession of it, you may depend that he is holding onto it just for the satisfaction it gives him to know that he has it, and not because he has any idea of ever spending it on himself."

Will made no reply.

His mind was grappling with a new train of thoughts which Jessie's explanation of the motif of the "Babes in the Wood" had started in his brain.

He could hardly bring himself to believe that there could be really anything in it, but he couldn't get away from the significant hints thrown out by the well-dressed stranger, whose manner indicated that he could throw a whole lot of light on the subject if he chose to do so.

CHAPTER XI.

WILL HEADS OFF A SERIOUS PANIC.

"Have you looked into the rift after the tin case?" asked Jessie.

"No," replied Will, coming out of his brown study; "but I'll do so now. We'll take a look together."

They approached the edge of the chasm and peered down into the rocky depths.

The sea ebbed and flowed at the bottom, sixty-odd feet below.

Rocks jutted out like shelves here and there part of the way down, and it was upon one of these projections that Will thought the tin case might have rested if it had really fallen into the rift.

He and Jessie looked everywhere, but the tin box was not to be seen.

"No use looking further," said Will. "Whatever it was I heard fall it went to the bottom and is covered by the water, and that's the end of it, I'm afraid."

"Until the poor old gentleman recovers control of his brain we will never know whether he had a tin box or not," replied Jessie.

"That's about the size of it. Shall we walk along the cliffs for a while?"

Jessie consented, and they spent an hour in happy companionship.

Then he escorted her to the cottage, politely declined an invitation to stay to dinner, and walked back to the store by way of the road.

When he reached home Mrs. Watts was preparing the mid-day meal.

"Where is my uncle?" Will asked her.

"In the store," replied the housekeeper.

Will glanced into the big room, which was closed, and saw Mr. Scudder seated at the tall desk behind the post-office pigeon-holes going over his accounts.

"I'd give something to know whether my uncle is an old villain or not," muttered the boy as he stood watching the postmaster at the other end of the store. "His actions last night are certainly very much against him. The attack on that poor old man was an outrage that calls for justice, but I don't feel that I ought to be the one to expose my uncle. I'll call on Mr. Jones after dinner and tell him my suspicions about the well-dressed stranger. And that reminds me I can find out his name by calling at the Roanoke House, where he is stopping. His signature will be on the register. It's a wonder I never thought of that before. I'll go there before I visit the constable."

Will went upstairs to his room.

"I'm going to tackle Mr. Scudder about my father in a few days, and this time I don't intend to let him wriggle out without giving me some satisfaction. If my uncle has worked any crooked business on me I'm going to find it out if I can. If he won't come up with the facts I'll consult Mr. Bacon about writing to the various mining districts of Colorado on the chance of learning what I have a right to know. The great difficulty I am up against is the lapse of time since my father's death. It will doubtless be hard to learn about matters that happened twelve years ago out in the wilds. However, I won't give up the ship as long as a plank is left to hold on to. I'm no babe in the wood even if Mr. Scudder is a rascally old uncle, bet your boots."

After dinner Will walked over to the hotel and consulted the register.

The well-dressed stranger arrived Thursday evening, and his name was the last one on a short list.

Curtis Jewell, however, had not registered under his right name, but had put down "William Brown, Boston," instead.

"So his name is William Brown," said Will to himself. "I can easily remember that. By the way, the old gentleman must be registered here, too. I'll see what his name is."

Will consulted the register for the previous day and read the name "Caleb Jarley, Boston."

From the Roanoke House the young factory boy walked over to the constable's home.

Mr. Jones was not at home, but with one of his associates was out scouring the neighborhood for the man who answered to the description furnished by Will.

As Mrs. Jones had no idea when her husband would return, Will sat down and wrote a note to the constable telling of his suspicions about the man registered at the Roanoke House as William Brown.

He then went to Sunday-school, arriving late, and when that was over he went home with Jessie and had tea with the family.

He informed Mr. Bacon that the name of the old gentleman was Caleb Jarley, and that he came from Boston.

Physically speaking, the old man was much improved, but his mind was still clouded.

Will told Mr. Bacon of his suspicions concerning "William Brown," and he also repeated the conversation he had had with the same "Brown" that morning on the cliffs, particularly that part in which the well-dressed stranger had made pointed remarks about the foxy old uncle and the babe that was left in the shuffle.

"There doesn't seem to be any doubt in my mind but that he intended the foxy uncle for Mr. Scudder and the babe for me. It was practically an insinuation that my uncle had taken advantage of me in some way. His reference to the story of the Babes in the Wood led Jessie and I to think that he meant that my father had left me some property when he died and that Mr. Scudder had taken possession of it and turned it to his own profit. What do you think about it?"

Mr. Bacon said that without any evidence to substantiate the man's insinuations it would not be fair to assume that Mr. Scudder was such a rascal.

He said there could be no harm in Will following the hint up, and demanding a satisfactory explanation from his uncle, as he was entitled to that.

If Mr. Scudder refused to give it then he would help Will to investigate the matter on his own hook.

Next morning Will reported at the factory at a quarter before seven, and took his place as time-keeper at the gate.

Nobody was late that morning, much to Will's satisfaction, for he hated to be obliged to report any of his late associates.

Mr. Bacon reached the office at eight o'clock and he started the new office assistant at some routine desk work.

Will was naturally a bright lad, and it did not take him long to get accustomed to his new duties.

He acquitted himself that day to the satisfaction of the bookkeeper, and gave promise of becoming a much better all-around clerk than Harry Harper, whom he had succeeded.

He was through at half-past five, but he stayed around the building until the six o'clock whistle released the operatives, as he wanted to say a few words to Jessie and go home with Joe Rylance.

When he reached the store he found a note there addressed to him.

It was from the constable.

The officer said that he had not received Will's note until that (Monday) morning.

Thinking that there might be something in the boy's suspicions about "William Brown" he had gone to the hotel to try and get a line on that person.

He learned from the clerk that the said "Brown" had left the village the night before by the night train for Boston.

He also said that he and one of the under constables had been looking for the man for whom the warrant had been taken out, but without the least success, and it was his opinion that the rascal had left the neighborhood.

That was equivalent to saying that he had abandoned the quest.

From Mrs. Watts Will learned that Mr. Scudder had admitted the well-dressed stranger to the store the evening previous, and that the two talked for more than an hour together, after which the man took his departure and she had not seen him since.

Will noticed that his uncle seemed nervous and constrained when he handed over the mail-bag for him to carry to the station as usual.

"His guilty conscience is working on him," chuckled the boy as he mounted his wheel and rode off.

Time went faster and more pleasant with Will in the office than when he worked in the operating room on the third floor.

His new work was more congenial to him, and he tried to do the very best he was capable of.

On Thursday morning Joe Rylance overslept himself and was late.

He found himself shut out till the noon whistle sounded and Will opened the gate for those operatives and other hands to go out who went to their homes for their dinners.

The new time-keeper was sorry that his chum was the first person he had to report for not arriving on time, but he couldn't help it.

Saturday afternoon at half-past four it was Will's duty to carry a box with the pay envelopes to the foremen of the different floors.

There were only three stories to the factory, and he had just handed over the last batch of envelopes to the foreman of the top floor, where most of the girls were employed at the knitting machines, when a loud explosion took place at one corner of the room, and a cloud of steam filled the air.

Some startled girl shouted "Fire!" and made a rush for the corridor where the elevator shaft was.

Will saw at a glance that there was going to be trouble unless the frantic girls could be headed off and reassured.

He made a rapid dash for the corridor himself, and was pleased to see that the iron door of the elevator shaft was closed.

To prevent the mob of girls crushing up against it in their terror he spurred to reach it before them.

As he slipped ahead of the girls, one with a scream threw up her hands and fell forward in a swoon.

"Back!" cried Will in ringing tones, as he dropped the cash-box and raised the fainting girl from the floor. "Back, all of you! There is no fire."

The frightened girls, however, continued to press forward toward the closed elevator.

CHAPTER XII.

LOVE AND LOYALTY POINT THE WAY TO FAME AND FORTUNE.

Will carried Jessie into the dressing-room and revived her with applications of cold water.

"Oh, Will, Will, save me!" were her first words on coming to.

"Brace up; you're not in any danger," he replied.

"Yes, yes, we all are! The factory is afire!" she cried with a look of terror in her eyes.

"Don't you believe it. There isn't any fire nearer than the engine-room."

Jessie was so badly scared that Will had some trouble in convincing her that her fears were groundless.

"Come, now, go and get your pay envelope, for it's nearly time to quit for the week."

He went with her as far as the foreman's desk, and then recovering his cash-box he returned downstairs to report to Mr. Bacon what had happened on the top floor.

The bookkeeper thanked him for saving his daughter from

being trampled on by the terrified girls, and assured him that the superintendent would appreciate his presence of mind in averting a panic that might easily have been attended with very serious results.

As Will suspected they would try to make a hero of him when they left the building, he got permission to quit five minutes before the whistle blew at five, and then he hurried down Main Street to the store.

The departure of Curtis Jewell from the village, coupled with the fact that Will, in furnishing the local editor with a narrative of the cowardly attack made on Caleb Jarley on the cliffs, had declared he would only know the chief ruffian if he saw him again, put Mr. Scudder at his ease once more.

The wound on Jarley's head was healing up in good shape, and he was no longer confined to the room.

He sat around the house or walked out in the little garden, as the mood seized him, like a person in a dream.

He talked a good deal about Horace Goodwin, his daughter who had married Edward Bacon, a will he was carrying in a tin box, and how careful he must be of it lest Curtis Jewell get hold of it, destroy it, and then get possession of the Goodwin property.

He repeated all this over so often that Mr. Bacon got a pretty clear idea of the situation.

Having deduced the foregoing facts from the old man's rambling talk, Mr. Bacon, in view of the fact that the tin case was the only thing that seemed to have been taken from Jarley's person after the assault on the cliffs, came to the conclusion that the old man's mission to Roanoke had become known to some interested party, presumably Curtis Jewell, and that this person had followed Jarley to the village with an accomplice, had managed to entice his victim out on the cliffs after work, and had forcibly taken the case from his person after a desperate struggle, during which the old man had been badly hurt.

After considering the matter from all points, Mr. Bacon decided that the circumstances justified him calling the services of a detective into the case.

Accordingly, he took the early Sunday morning train for Boston.

Will met Jessie after Sunday-school as usual and accompanied her home.

In answer to his inquiry about Caleb Jarley, the girl told him that the old man was improving in every way but mentally.

"However, my father has gleaned enough from his disjointed talk to satisfy him that Mr. Jarley came here to deliver a tin box containing a valuable document to us," added Jessie.

"Then you have some evidence to show that the old man really had such a case in his possession when he was attacked?" said Will.

"Yes, my father is sure of it. He also feels certain that another person was so deeply interested in the contents of the box that he and a companion followed Mr. Jarley down here from Boston, lured him out on the cliffs, and attacked him for the purpose of getting the case away from him. As the box is missing the inference is that the rascal secured it. If he really did, I'm afraid it will be a bad thing for us. The matter is so serious that father went to Boston this morning to consult with a detective."

"Well, I think the man who registered at the hotel as William Brown ought to be looked after," said Will. "I told you and your father that I strongly suspect that he is one of the men who attacked Caleb Jarley. The more I think the matter over the more I am convinced that the man I saw at the station the night of Jarley's arrival, and subsequently encountered on the cliffs, was William Brown in disguise. The inquiries he made about your father, and which he made no effort to avail himself of, add to the evidence against him. Maybe William Brown wasn't his real name, either."

"If he is the man we suspect, his name is Curtis Jewell," replied Jessie.

"Curtis Jewell, eh? I am satisfied that my uncle is well acquainted with him. Perhaps I can find out if this William Brown really is Curtis Jewell."

"Do you mean to ask Mr. Scudder? He may have reasons for not telling you."

"I have little doubt that he will not tell me if I ask him in the ordinary way. He has already denied anything more than the most casual acquaintance with the man. But I think I can spring the matter on him in a way that will make him tell the truth, now that I see that it may be to your interest to learn the real state of the case."

"It would be very much to our interest to know if the well-dressed stranger who represented himself as William Brown is Curtis Jewell," said Jessie earnestly.

"Then leave the matter to me," replied Will in a determined tone. "You say if this Curtis Jewell got the tin case it would be a bad thing for you?"

"Yes."

"Well, it's my opinion that neither he nor anybody else has it. I'll bet a whole lot that it's down at the bottom of the rift."

"That is just as bad for us as if he had got it and destroyed the will that we believe is inside of it."

"The tin box contained a will, did it?" said the boy in an interested tone.

"I did not mean to tell that," said Jessie, looking a bit confused, "because—because a family secret is connected with it."

"Oh, well, you needn't mind me, Jessie. You know I think too much of you to breathe a word of anything that passes between us. You know that, don't you?" he said, taking her hand and putting his other arm around her waist. "You must know that I think more of you than any one else in the world. I have often wished you were my sister; but lately I have changed my mind about that. If you were my sister I'd lose you some time. Some other fellow would take you away. Now I want to take you away myself some day and keep you always, for I love you very dearly. Do you believe me?"

"Yes," she said after a pause, turning her head away.

"Do you care for me in the same way? I'm only a factory boy, though I have been advanced to the office, but I mean to be something better than an ordinary workman by and by. I mean to rise in the world, and when I do I'm going to ask you to be my wife—that is, if you care enough for me to wait. Do you love me enough to wait for me?"

He pressed her gently to him.

"What's your answer, dear?"

"It is 'yes,' for I love you, Will, with all my heart, and I never will care for anybody else but you."

Then they sealed their own betrothal with a kiss.

For some time after that the tin case, and everything else, was forgotten in the new bliss that filled their young hearts, as they walked along the cliff path.

Finally Jessie said:

"I am sure it will be right for me to tell you our family story in order that you may understand how much depends on the contents of the tin box that poor old Caleb Jarley was bringing to us when he was struck down in such a cowardly manner."

Seated on a green turf patch of ground under the shadow of Storm Stone Rock, with the sunshine sifting through her golden hair, and the placid surface of the broad Atlantic sparkling before them, Jessie told Will the story of a brave little woman's devotion to, and sacrifice for, the man she loved better than all the world besides.

It would have been a sad story but for the loyalty and love the man gave to the woman who had given up fortune and social position for his sake.

Will never said a word during the entire recital, but when Jessie bowed her head and wept as she recounted the trials her father and mother went through because fortune took sides against them, he put his arms around her, kissed her quivering lips and comforted her as best he knew how.

"Years went by and mother learned that grandfather had taken her only cousin, Curtis Jewell, into his home and made him his heir," went on Jessie. "After a time father found out that Mr. Jewell was leading a fast life on the strength of the liberal allowance grandfather was giving him, and he often wondered how my grandfather stood for it. He could only account for it on the supposition that his father-in-law was not aware of the true facts. Finally mother took sick and died, and that almost broke father's heart. Only that he had me to care for, who he said was the living image of mother when he married her, it is hard to say how he would have borne up under the bitter blow. A year later we moved down here, when the knitting mill was built and put in operation, and here we have been, with my aunt for housekeeper, ever since."

"I think I can finish your story myself," said Will as Jessie paused. "Your grandfather found out at last the true character of Curtis Jewell, and his heart turned back to your mother, as he realized he had not treated her fairly, and was being punished for it through the undeserving nephew he had made his heir. Feeling maybe that he was

near his end he made a new will in favor of your mother, gave it in charge of Caleb Jarley, and told him to deliver it as soon as he was dead into your father's hands. Curtis Jewell, however, found this fact out, and not wanting to lose his hold on his uncle's wealth, he watched the old man closely, and as soon as he found that he was coming down here he preceded him by a day or two so as to look over the ground and complete his plans for getting the will away from the messenger. As a precautionary measure he signed the fictitious name of William Brown on the hotel register so that his connection with the case might not afterward be suspected. Then he took advantage of an old acquaintance-ship with my uncle, Mr. Scudder, and through some hold he may have on him, he compelled my uncle to help him out in his scheme."

"Why, Will, surely Mr. Scudder has had nothing to do with—"

"I am sorry to say that he had. I will tell you a secret that you must not breathe even to your father till I give you permission. Mr. Scudder was one of the two men who assaulted Caleb Jarley on the cliffs. I recognized him, but have kept the knowledge to myself. Mr. Scudder himself does not suspect that I am aware of his rascality."

"Oh, Will, is that really true?" cried the astonished girl.

"It is true. There is no doubt whatever now in my mind that William Brown is not only Curtis Jewell but the man who struck down Caleb Jarley. He had the tin case in his hand when I came up. Startled by my sudden appearance on the scene, he dropped it, and it fell into the rift, and there it lies now at the bottom with the will, which means so much to you, in it. Jessie, I am going to recover that case at any risk for your sake."

"Will, Will, you're the best and dearest boy in all the world; but you must not risk your life in the rift even for my sake," she cried tearfully.

Will looked into her streaming eyes and kissed her trembling lips.

If he needed inspiration for his perilous venture he found it in her lovely face, so her words were not heeded by him.

He had determined on his course, and would put it through at any hazard.

He did not dream that Fortune and Fame hovered above him at that moment beckoning him on where Love led, nor that the dangerous quest for the missing will was to prove the greatest event of his young life, and herald his name far beyond the secluded confines of Roanoke village.

CHAPTER XIII.

HOW WILL FINDS THE TIN CASE AND SOMETHING ELSE AS WELL.

Two hours later Will and his chum, Joe Rylance, stood under the shadow of Storm Stone Rock, the former prepared to undertake his risky adventure, and the latter ready to help him out to the best of his ability.

Will carried a rope long enough to reach from the top of the rift to the surface of the water below, while Joe carried a heavy iron wedge and a small sledge-hammer.

The boys had paused to put knots into the rope at a distance of a yard apart.

They soon found a crevice in the rocks where the wedge could be driven in and counted upon to hold tight.

As soon as this part of the work had been completed to Will's satisfaction, he tied one end of the rope securely to the iron wedge and then threw the rope itself down into the rift, where it dangled within an inch of the surface of the water, which was at low tide.

Will then knelt down and lowered himself over the edge of the rift.

As his head disappeared over the edge, and the rope shivered under the weight of his descending body, Jessie came bounding up to the spot, her face showing the anxiety she felt over the outcome of her boy lover's venture.

"Joe, Joe, I'm so nervous!" she cried.

"Cut it out, Jess. Will's going down and it won't do you any good to make any squeal over it."

"Oh, dear! If he should fall he'd be killed!"

"I'll gamble on it he won't fall. The rope is knotted all the way down. He can't fall as long as he holds on, and I'll bet he won't take any more chances than he can help. Take a look at him. He's swinging as gracefully as a circus performer."

Jessie, with her heart in her mouth, ventured to look down.

Some awful stories had been told about the perilous character of the rift.

The dangers of the rift, however, were much exaggerated, but at the best it was a bad place to monkey about in.

Will kept on going down, fending himself off from the sharp rocks, and looking around sharply on the chance that the tin case might have lodged on some shelf not visible from above.

The rocks were bare all about him, and there was nothing for him to do but keep right on.

At length his bare feet touched the water, for he had removed his shoes and stockings before starting, and then he swung himself on to a ledge and knelt down.

In that position his eyes came on a level with an aperture in the side of the rift, and a gleam of sunshine piercing the chasm and reflected from a wet rock at the water's edge glistened upon a piece of brass.

"I wonder what that is?" thought Will. "It looks like a brass-bound box."

He put his hand into the hole and pulled the thing out.

It was a small brass-bound oak box.

"Here's a find. I wonder what's in it? Can't be a great deal, for it feels light. It's a fine-looking box, though the shine is all off it. I'm going to freeze on to it. Funny how it came to be stowed away in that hole just above high-water mark. I don't see how any one would take the trouble to climb down here to hide it. Possibly the person rowed here in a boat, but he was taking chances doing it. Maybe it's a quantity of stolen money in bills. If the bills were large enough you could stow a fortune in this box. Well, I've got no time to figure on what it contains. I'll just tie it to the end of the rope and then attend to the business that brought me down here."

There was a flat brass handle at each end of the box which folded into an indentation in the wood made to receive it, and Will passed the end of the rope through one of them and made it fast.

Then he turned his attention once more to the recovery of the tin case.

If it was anywhere it was down in the water.

As the water was a dark green color, and opaque, and its depth even at present low tide was unknown to Will, it looked like a hopeless job to expect to find anything lying on the bottom of the rift.

The boy looked down into it with a rueful stare.

Will saw a piece of wood that had been washed in from the sea and taken lodgment in a crevice.

It was all of six feet long, and the factory lad thought he would get it and try to ascertain the depth of the water with it.

So he crept from rock to rock with great caution till he got near enough to reach the end of the wood.

As he started to lift it he saw something glistening between it and the rocky wall of the rift.

Creeping closer he reached over and grasped it.

It was a thin, oblong, japanned tin case.

Will uttered a shout of satisfaction, for this must surely be the box he had come after.

CHAPTER XIV.

GOOD FORTUNE COMES TO JESSIE.

With the same caution as before Will made his way back to the hanging rope.

His mission had been triumphantly successful, and he climbed up with a happy heart.

Although both Joe and Jessie looked down constantly during the time Will was in the depths of the rift, they only caught an occasional and partial view of him owing to an overhanging shelf of rock.

At length the quivering of the rope showed that he was coming up.

Jessie waited with anxious impatience for him to reach the top, not that she had any great expectations of his having found the precious case, but because she was much worried over his stay below.

As Will stuck his head above the edge of the rift Joe extended a hand to him and pulled him up the rest of the way.

"I'm so glad you've come up," said Jessie earnestly.

"Why, you didn't expect I'd stay down there indefinitely, did you?" chuckled Will.

"Well, you didn't see any trace of the case, did you?" he said.

"I did better than that—I found the case itself," he answered.

"Will Leggatt, you didn't!" she screamed incredulously.

"Didn't I? What do you call that?" and he flashed the oblong box before her eyes.

Jessie uttered a little shriek of delight as Will placed the case in her hands.

Disregarding Joe's presence she threw her arms around Will's neck and kissed him twice on the lips.

"Now I'm going to pull up my own prize package," said the factory boy.

"What do you mean by that?" asked Joe, somewhat puzzled.

"Wait till you see what I found down there," replied Will, hauling up the line slowly and carefully, lest he shake the brass-bound box off the rope.

In a few minutes he landed it on the rocks, an object of great curiosity to both Joe and the girl.

"Where did you find it?" asked Joe. "It looks as if it held something of value."

"I found it in a hole in the rock just above high-water mark," replied Will, coiling up the line which had done him such good service. "Take the hammer, Joe, and knock out the wedge. Mr. Scudder would have a fit if I failed to return it to the store, though it isn't worth anything to speak of."

The wedge was removed from the crevice and then the trio took up their march for the cottage.

On their arrival Jessie wanted them to remain for tea but they declined the invitation, Will promising to call later if nothing prevented.

During their walk back to the village the two boys speculated as to the contents of the brass-bound box.

"How are you going to open it, Will?" Joe asked. "It would be a pity to smash it, for it's a valuable box, though somewhat old-fashioned. If it was revarnished and polished it would look good enough for a king's drawing-room."

"Higgins, the locksmith, will probably be able to open it with some of his tools," replied Will. "I shouldn't care to break or deface it just to get at the contents in a hurry, for the box may be a great deal more valuable than what is inside."

They parted outside the store and Will carried the box to his room without being observed by either Mrs. Watts or his uncle.

He locked it up in his trunk and returned downstairs.

Now that the tin case had found its way into the hands of those for whom it was evidently intended, and he was fully satisfied, after hearing Jessie's story, that the stranger who had registered at the hotel as Brown was really Curtis Jewell, Will reconsidered his intention of forcing the truth from Mr. Scudder by threatening to expose him as the accomplice of the well-dressed rascal.

"I'll keep that advantage in reserve and use it to make my uncle tell the truth about my father as soon as I get ready for business, which will be pretty soon," said Will to himself as he walked into the sitting-room and found the table set for tea.

After the meal he started for the station on his wheel to get the Sunday night mail.

When the train rolled in the only persons who alighted were Mr. Bacon and a small, alert-looking man, known to the Boston police department as the cleverest detective on the force.

Mr. Bacon left the sleuth at the hotel and went home, where a great surprise awaited him, as the reader knows.

Jessie met him at the door and entered the sitting-room on his arm.

"I've set the ball rolling, Jessie, and I have strong hopes, with the evidence that Will Leggatt can furnish, to catch Curtis Jewell in a trap that will land him in the State prison, but if he has destroyed the will he probably took from Caleb Jarley, we will be forced into a long and expensive legal fight to establish your claim to your grandfather's property."

"Can you stand a big surprise, father?" asked Jessie with dancing eyes.

"A big surprise! What do you mean?"

"I mean that Curtis Jewell did not get grandfather's will, after all."

"How do you know that he didn't?" said Mr. Bacon, looking hard at his daughter.

"Will was right when he said that the tin case fell into the rift."

"What makes you so sure of it?"

"Because Will went down into the rift this afternoon and found it. Here it is."

She placed the unopened case in her father's hands as she spoke, and he stared at it like one who is not sure of the evidence of his own eyes.

"My goodness, Jessie!" ejaculated her father. "Is this really the case?"

The cover was held close by two small clasps, easily moved, and Mr. Bacon opened the case and found therein what he expected—the last will and testament of Horace Goodwin.

"It is your grandfather's will," said the bookkeeper, unfolding the document with emotion and excitement combined.

It was not lengthy, and was properly executed and witnessed according to law, one of the witnesses being Caleb Jarley.

It left the bulk of Mr. Goodwin's wealth to his discarded daughter, or, if she was dead, to her issue, if any.

To his nephew, Curtis Jewell, the sum of \$1,000 was bequeathed; to Caleb Jarley, \$10,000, in consideration of faithful services and companionship, and to household servants and various old business employees different sums.

A clause was inserted, evidently aimed at Curtis Jewell, that any beneficiary contesting the will was to lose the amount of his bequest.

CHAPTER XV.

IT IS HOPED EVERYTHING ENDS TO THE SATISFACTION OF THE READER.

Next morning Jessie did not show up at the factory, and Will, after looking up the road and seeing no sign of her, closed the gate and marked absent against her name.

Mr. Scudder had been stricken with a sudden illness, and lay unconscious on the lounge in the sitting-room.

The housekeeper had been anxiously awaiting Will's return to send him for a doctor.

The physician, when he arrived, declared that the postmaster was suffering from a stroke of paralysis, and ordered him put to bed.

Mrs. Watts said she would look after him during the day, so Will started for the factory at the usual time.

When Mr. Bacon reached his desk he told Will that Jessie had quit work at the mill for good, as there no longer was any necessity for her to make her living, since through the terms of her grandfather's will she was an heiress.

Soon after the superintendent arrived he called Will into his office and complimented him on his conduct Saturday afternoon in stopping the panic among the girls on the third floor.

When Will came into the counting-room again, Mr. Bacon told him that the detective he had brought down with him from Boston the evening before had called to have a talk with him about the attack on Caleb Jarley and other matters that appeared to have a bearing on the outrage.

He then introduced the boy to the detective.

The sleuth asked Will to walk out into the yard, and there he listened to the boy's story of what happened on the cliffs on Saturday night a week before.

The detective, having got all he wanted out of Will, went in and saw Mr. Bacon, after which he took an afternoon train back for Boston.

When Will got home that afternoon he found that his uncle was about the same.

After bringing the mail from the station and distributing it, Will left the store in charge of Billy Bray and carried the brass-bound oak box to the little store of Higgings, the locksmith.

"I want you to try and open this box without disfiguring it, Mr. Higgings," he said, placing the article on the work-bench.

It was not an easy job, but at the end of fifteen minutes he succeeded in unlocking it.

Will did not care to investigate the contents in the presence of the locksmith, so paying him for his services, the boy carried the box back to the store.

Throwing back the cover, he took out the newspaper, which was creased and discolored, and laid it aside.

Underneath lay a pile of documents tied with a piece of red tape.

He untied the tape and looked at the writing on the backs of the different papers, which were doubly sealed with big dabs of red wax, on each of which was imprinted an official seal that gave them an important look.

After pondering over them for a while, he laid them down and picked up the folded newspaper.

In a few minutes he was deeply interested in the newspaper story, which, he discovered, was vitally connected with the brass-bound box and its contents.

It was the report of the theft of State Department papers of the utmost importance to the United States Government, and incidentally to another nation as well.

Will easily saw that his discovery of the box was a very important matter, and he decided to take counsel with Mr. Bacon at once.

He went to the Bacon home with his box.

He told the bookkeeper that he wanted to see him about a very important matter, so Mr. Bacon ushered him into the sitting-room and closed the door.

The boy then showed him the brass-bound box which Jessie had already told him Will had found in the rift while hunting for the tin case.

Mr. Bacon examined the contents of the box.

"I will take charge of this matter in your interest, Will, and will communicate with Washington at once," he said.

Three days later the afternoon train brought a secret service man to Roanoke.

He called on Mr. Bacon immediately and presented an official letter from the Department of State, requesting him to turn the brass-bound box over to the messenger.

This was done, and then the man asked to be introduced to Will Leggatt.

Will told him the story of the finding of the box, told him why he had opened it, but assured him that he had not attended to pry into the nature of the papers.

A few days later the entire press of the country published an account of the recovery of the missing official papers by Will Leggatt, of Roanoke village, Mass.

But he also got something more tangible than mere reputation, for the Government sent him a reward of \$50,000, which made him a rich boy.

Before he got the money, however, he found out that he was heir to a third interest in a Colorado gold and silver mine, the dividends of which Mr. Scudder had been receiving for about ten years, and hoarding up in his strong-box in his bedroom.

This discovery came about through a letter addressed to his uncle, marked important, which Will had taken the liberty to open because Mr. Scudder was in no shape to do so himself.

The letter contained an offer from a Western capitalist for Will's interest in the mine.

Will showed the letter to Mr. Bacon, who at once took charge of the boy's interests, ascertained that the offer was a good one, and closed with it in Mr. Scudder's name.

As soon as the postmaster was able to be around again he was subjected to a third degree interview by Mr. Bacon and Will, and compelled to own up that he had been using the boy's inheritance for his own personal advantage.

Will told him then that he had recognized him that night on the cliffs in the companionship of the disgraced Curtis Jewell, alias William Brown, and on condition of keeping the matter quiet Mr. Scudder's signed a statement admitting that the boy's suspicions about Brown were well founded, and that Curtis Jewell was an old acquaintance.

In the meanwhile Jewell had got a lawyer to probate the original will, but before many days elapsed he was arrested on the charge of conspiracy and murderous assault on Caleb Jarley.

Such a strong case was made out against him that he pleaded guilty and threw himself on the mercy of the court. Edward Bacon asked that he be treated with leniency, and so the judge handed him out the minimum sentence and he went to prison for two years.

Ultimately the Goodwin wealth passed into Mr. Bacon's hands in trust for his daughter, who received it on the day of her marriage to Will Leggatt, when she was twenty-one and he a year older.

Next week's issue will contain "FOX & DAY, BROKERS; OR, THE YOUNG MONEY-MAKERS OF WALL STREET."

HELP YOUR COUNTRY!

THE LIBERTY LOAN

By W. G. McADOO, Secretary of the Treasury.

For the purpose of equipping with arms, clothing and food our gallant soldiers who have been called to the field; maintaining our navy and our valiant tars upon the high seas; providing the necessary means to pay the wages of our soldiers and sailors and, if the bills now pending in the Congress passes, the monthly allowance for the support of their dependent families and to supply them with life insurance; constructing a great fleet of merchant vessels to maintain the line of communication with our brave troops in France, and to keep our commerce afloat upon the high seas in defiance of the German kaiser and his submarines; creating a great fleet of aeroplanes, which will give complete supremacy in the air to the United States and the brave nations fighting with us against the German military menace; and for other necessary war purposes—the Congress of the United States has authorized the Secretary of the Treasury to sell to the American people bonds of the United States bearing four per cent. interest, with valuable tax exemptions, and convertible under certain conditions into other issues of United States bonds that may be authorized by the Congress. The official circular of the Treasury Department gives full details.

There is now offered to the American people a new issue of \$3,000,000,000 of bonds to be known as the Second Liberty Loan. They will be issued in such denominations and upon such terms that every patriotic citizen will have an opportunity to assist the government by lending his money upon the security of a United States government bond.

It is essential to the success of the war and to the support of our gallant troops that these loans shall not only be subscribed, but oversubscribed. No one is asked to donate or give his money to the government; but every one is asked to lend his money to the government. The loans will be repaid in full with interest at the rate of four per cent. per annum. A government bond is the safest investment in the world; it is as good as currency and yet better, because the government bond bears interest and currency does not. No other investment compares with it for safety, ready convertibility into cash, and unquestioned availability as collateral security for loans in any bank in the United States.

People by thousands ask the Treasury constantly how they can help the government in this war. Through the purchase of Liberty Bonds every one can help. No more patriotic duty can be performed by those who cannot actually fight upon the field of battle than to furnish the government with the necessary money to enable it to give our brave soldiers and sailors all that they require to make them strong for the fight and capable of winning a swift victory over our enemies.

We fight, first of all, for America's vital rights, the right to the unmolested and unobstructed use of the high seas, so that the surplus products of our farms, our mines and our factories may be carried into the harbors of every friendly nation in the world. Our welfare and prosperity as a people depend upon our right of peaceful intercourse with all the nations of the earth. To abandon these rights by withdrawing our ships and commerce from the seas upon the order of a military despot in Europe would destroy prosperity and bring disaster and humiliation upon the American people.

We fight to protect our citizens against assassination and murder upon the high seas while in the peaceful exercise of those rights demanded by international law and every instinct and dictate of humanity.

We fight to preserve our democratic institutions and our sovereignty as a nation against the menace of a powerful and ruthless military autocracy headed by the German kaiser, whose ambition is to dominate the world.

We fight for the noble ideal of universal democracy and liberty, the right of the smallest and weakest nations equally with the most powerful to live and to govern themselves according to the will of their own people.

We fight for peace, for that just and lasting peace which agonized and tortured humanity craves and which not the sword nor the bayonet of a military despot but the supremacy of vindicated right alone can restore to a distracted world.

To secure these ends I appeal to every man and woman who resides upon the soil of free America and enjoys the blessings of her priceless institutions to join the League of Patriots by purchasing a Liberty Bond.

TWO FOR A CENT

—OR—

THE CHEAPEST BOY ON EARTH

By GASTON GARNE

(A SERIAL STORY.)

CHAPTER I (Continued).

Mr. and Mrs. Hollister, neighbors, and Mrs. James and her grown-up daughter Lizzie, were also waiting to see Mr. Whaxter.

So was the Rev. Mr. Thorpe, for Whaxter found it useful in his business to keep on good terms with the church.

Rufe King, the hired man, came lounging from one of the barns as he saw the buggy coming into the yard, while all the household and visitors came hurrying from the porch.

Milt shot one look at Annie, and his heart sank over the separation that he knew was coming.

"Did ye win your suit, Job?" called Mrs. Kidderby as Whaxter stopped his horse.

"Get out—you!" growled Whaxter under his breath, whereat Milt, looking more like a criminal than anything else, sprang down to the ground.

"No, I didn't win my suit," growled Mr. Whaxter, as he jumped down to the ground. "I lost it—clean, plumb lost it! Damages of five thousand dollars awarded against me. And how do you suppose it happened?"

He glowered at Milt, whereat Mrs. Kidderby, who followed the look, croaked, suspiciously:

"Through that boy?"

"Yes! Through that boy!" roared Job Whaxter, at which a chorus of sympathy went up from those assembled. "Milt Bradlock came and told me the truth about Rawdon and the heifer. To-day he went on the stand and denied all knowledge of the whole thing. That settled the case, and I lose five thousand dollars."

"Oh, what made you do it?" gasped Mrs. Kidderby, looking wonderingly at our hero.

"What made him do it?" thundered Job Whaxter. "I'll tell you all what made him do it. Somebody bought him out to swear against me—and he went to court and swore the way he was paid and threw me down!"

Milt had looked only at Annie.

He saw a shocked look in her face, as if she believed her raging uncle.

That look on Annie's face stung the boy to action.

"Stop where you are, Whaxter," he shouted. "You needn't lie any more about me. I didn't sell you out. I told the plain straight truth, and you know it!"

"What I do know," yelled Whaxter, turning on the boy, "is that you've betrayed your best friend for a price! You're the cheapest boy on earth—and I'll soon prove it to the satisfaction of every one!"

"Will you?" challenged Milt. "Huh! Now you've got me started, and I'll soon show people that your kind come two for a cent!"

CHAPTER II.

THE TEST OF GRIT.

"You hear him, neighbors, friends?" roared Job Whaxter. "You hear him threaten me—me, the man that's fed him! Me, the man that has always intended to give him a good start in life! Your ears have told what I have been telling you. Milt Bradlock is a serpent, a viper!"

Job looked at the clergyman, as if feeling that later he might need the reverend gentleman's testimony.

"It's very shocking, very," declared the Reverend Mr. Thorpe, sorrowfully. "Milt, I'm sorry to see you turn out this way."

"Why, there isn't a word of truth in what Job Whaxter's saying," throbbed the boy. "He's lying with every breath. Why, that man tried to coax me to go into court and swear to a lie, and I wouldn't do it. Now, that's the truth."

Again Milt shot a swift look at Annie's face.

He felt, with a throb of despair, that the girl was not inclined to believe him.

"Don't say any more, Milt," urged the clergyman, in a shocked voice. "Don't add to your falsehoods. The idea of telling us that Mr. Whaxter tried to induce you to swear falsely! Why, the idea is absurd to us who know him."

"To you who think you know him," sneered Milt, hotly.

Rufe King had started toward one of the stables with his horse and buggy.

Mrs. Kidderby, looking around, suddenly uttered a shriek of terror.

"O-o-o-h! Run, everybody! The wild bull has got out of his pen!"

Everything else was forgotten.

Every one looked toward the pen, then started to run.

That bull was one of the wildest creatures that ever came to a farm.

It had a record of having killed two men already, but Job had bought the bull because it was a fine-blooded animal and cheap.

Whaxter had hoped to sell the bull at a bargain.

Just at this moment, though, Job would have sold that bull for a nickel.

For the creature, which had found the bars of the bull-pen loose, had succeeded in getting out into the farmyard.

For a moment the big, powerful, ugly creature pawed the dirt and tossed its head.

Then, seeing that its escape was discovered, the bull uttered a bellow and started out on the hill.

It saw Job first and started on a bound after him.

Whaxter, screaming madly with fear, made a wild break for the gateway. Here there were two tall trees.

Perhaps he had a notion of climbing to safety.

But the bull, with its head down, charged wildly, bent on overtaking its scared owner.

As Annie, with the others, turned to flee frantically to the porch, she felt the red cape snatched from her shoulders.

For Milt Bradlock was a boy who could wake up in a second at need.

He snatched the red cape and ran, flaunting it, so as to get between the mad bull and the scared Whaxter.

Wave! At sight of the red thing the bull stopped short, snorted, bellowed, and then our hero had the bull in full pursuit of himself.

Now Milt Bradlock was doing swift stunts with his feet.

He headed for a rail fence near by, but the mad bull traveled faster.

"Oh, Milt will be killed!" screamed Annie, terror-stricken.

The Reverend Mr. Thorpe looked on, in equal certainty that Milt's time had come. The clergyman's white lips moved in prayer.

Mrs. James fainted. Mrs. Kidderby looked as if she wanted to.

Milt had one chance in a thousand of getting to that fence and over ere the bull caught him.

The other nine hundred and ninety-nine chances won.

With his nostrils hissing steam, the bull caught up with the boy.

A chorus of shrieks came from the porch, as the spectators saw Milt rise in air on the bull's horns.

Toss! Milt Bradlock flew sprawling through the air.

Straight over the fence he went, landing in a huddled bundle of human flesh on the ground past the fence.

Bump! plug! thump!

To the accompaniment of renewed screaming from the spectators the bull, not satisfied with its work,

was battering down the rail fence that separated it from the boy with the red cape.

"Jump, Milt! Run!"

It was Annie's clear, sweet voice, now tremulous with dread.

The fact that she seemed to care roused the boy out of his daze.

He sprang up, ran blindly, and found himself at the foot of a maple tree.

"Oh, quick, Milt, for the love of heaven!" screamed Annie.

Milt drew himself up into the branches.

Bump! The bull's head struck against the trunk of the tree with nearly enough force to jar the boy to the ground.

But Milt held on, climbing higher, too, while the bull made two more head-on assaults, then stood some distance away, snorting and looking about as if wondering whom next to attack.

"Somebody get a gun and kill the beast. I won't have it on the place any longer!" yelled Whaxter, who had gained the safety of a big tree down by the gate.

There was no gun kept in Whaxter's house.

But Milt, looking around, saw in the field at work a boy named Chub Eastman. He and Chub were chums, despite the fact that Chub, also an orphan, worked for Rawdon.

"Chub," shouted Milt, "get a gun and take a shot at this bull!"

"All right!" bellowed Chub, who, turning, went on a dead run for Rawdon's house.

In a few moments back came Chub, running across the field that separated the two farms.

The bull, as if scenting mischief, went on a dead run for the stone wall between the two fields.

But Chub reached the wall first.

Dropping to his knees and resting the gun over the wall, Chub sighted and fired.

The bull staggered, and then fell.

Leaping over the wall, Chub, from a distance of twenty feet, put in a second bullet that stopped the bull's struggles forever.

"Kinder lively times you're having over your way," greeted Chub, running up as Milt descended from the tree.

All of Whaxter's guests now came running forward, but Annie outdistanced them all.

"Oh, Milt!" she cried, her eyes glowing. "You did that splendidly—so bravely!"

"Here, enough of that, girl!" sputtered Job Whaxter, striding up. "Get back into the house. Now, Milt Bradlock, I hope you're satisfied. You've been the means of having that valuable bull killed."

"Why, Brother Whaxter!" uttered the Reverend Mr. Thorpe, in surprise. "You——"

"It isn't worth while to say anything to him, Mr. Thorpe," flashed Milt, scornfully. "Job Whaxter couldn't tell the truth if he tried!"

Thereupon Milt turned, thrust his arm through Chub's and started for the roadway.

(To be continued.)

CURRENT NEWS

When a boat containing a large consignment of lemon and vanilla extract and hair tonic for the Indians, who never make cake, and are not bold, capsized in Lake Vermilion, Minnesota, recently, fishermen circulated reports that the fish swam in circles, zigzagged and did an unlimited number of tango gyrations.

Saying that he would save the officials the trouble and expense of taking him to the county jail at Anderson, Ind., to serve a fifteen days' sentence for intoxication, William Blake took his commitment in his pocket and delivered it to Sheriff Hughes with the request that he be locked up. His request was granted.

Although he is 105 years "young" and fought in the Civil War, "Uncle" John Dowd of Williamina, Ore., has not had enough of excitement and wants to enlist in the United States Army and go to France to fight the Germans. He is as earnest in his desire to enlist as any youthful recruit. Dowd walks two miles daily and often makes six miles a day on foot.

Within the confines of Los Angeles County, California, there are 65,000 colonies of bees, the value of the combined output of which in honey and wax reaches a grand total of \$175,000 a year, furnishing healthful, profitable and pleasant employment to not less than 2,500 persons. This total is believed to be the high-water mark of the industry in the United States.

In a Western power plant the attendants are making clever use of the periscope idea. In order to read the temperature of the oil in transformers, it has been necessary in the past to use a step-ladder to reach the thermometer mounted at the top of each unit. By using a simple periscope on each transformer, it is now possible for the attendants to read the thermometer scale, which is illuminated by a lamp suspended near it, from the floor.

According to a Japanese navy officer recently in Washington, says the New York Times, the new battleship Nagato, now under construction in the naval dock at Kure, Japan, will be the largest war vessel yet undertaken by that country. She will displace 32,000 tons and while similar in many respects to the Ise, under construction at Kobe, is expected to embody several important improvements and to develop more speed than the twenty-two knots credited to the latter vessel. Japan has five dreadnaughts in commission or building, and four battle cruisers. Two additional ships of the battle cruiser class are to be completed by 1923.

The Secretary of War has authorized department commanders of the army to discharge for fraudulent enlistment enlisted men under eighteen years of age, who have enlisted fraudulently, when satisfactory evidence of age is furnished, the provisions of Paragraph 1380, Army Regulations, to apply in each case. Evidence in such cases should consist of (1) a duly authenticated copy of a municipal or other official record of the soldier's birth, if such record exists; (2) the affidavit of the soldier's parents (or guardian) as to the date of his birth; and (3) the affidavits of two or more disinterested persons who are able to testify from their own personal knowledge as to the soldier's age.

People living in temperate climates have little conception of the heavy expense and great inconvenience which dwellers in many parts of the tropics are subject to because of the rapid deterioration of iron. The humidity, together with the penetrating salt in the atmosphere, if one is located near the sea, serves rapidly to corrode metal parts or structures which, in other regions, would last a life-time, says Popular Mechanics. For example, in the South Sea Islands corrugated roofing of galvanized iron will be covered with red rust within from five to seven years. Because of this condition pure brass is much in demand, particularly for boat and other marine fixtures. Hooks, pins and other fittings which are merely coated with brass or are bronzed, go to pieces within a few months under the action of the elements and so are not worth buying at low prices. The tendency is for wood also to decay rapidly in a humid tropical climate.

Boston has established a new club house for enlisted men in the Service, especially in the Navy, at 11 Nassau street, in that city. It is called "Shore Leave Club" and was established and is managed by the Boston Y. M. C. Union. It has grown in popularity and the rooms and beds have been filled and emergency cots are now being used. On Sept. 8, seventy-two men were accommodated, including twelve who slept on the roof. Many have enjoyed this small but home-like club. Here men may lounge, smoke, write letters or play games. The Woman's City Club committee, which assisted in opening "Shore Leave Club" continues to help. A canteen supplies the men with minor luxuries; nominal charges are made for sleeping and meals. Breakfast has been served every morning since the club was opened, and in addition Sunday dinners now are served. The Union is to establish a second club in its official headquarters in Boylston street.

THE CAVE OF GOLD

—OR—

THE BOY MINERS OF THE ROCKIES

By ED KING

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER VII (Continued).

"He came mighty near it, though," from George.
"Yes, he knocked my hat off."

They reached the street, and Sam recovered his hat and put it on; then they made their way to the Palace Hotel and entered.

"What luck did ye have?" asked the landlord, Jim Stokes.

"Pretty good luck," said Bob.

"Whar did ye play?"

"In the Occidental Hotel."

"How much did ye git thar?"

"Thirty dollars."

"I didn't think ye'd git as much as ye did here," with a satisfied grin.

"They were not quite so liberal."

"See ennythin' uv thet feller whut threatened ye, young feller?" asked a miner, addressing Sam.

"Yes, he took a couple of shots at us from an alley a few minutes ago," was the reply.

"Is thet so?"

"Yes; at any rate, somebody did, and I don't know who else would do it, for he was the only one that has threatened."

"Oh, et wuz him, ye kin bet on et."

"I think it likely that you are right."

"I'm shore uv et. He didn't hit ye?"

"No, but the first bullet went through my hat," and Sam took the hat off and showed the bullet hole.

"A purty close call!"

"Ye bet et wuz!"

"He came purty nigh gittin' ye!"

"He shore did!"

Such were a few of the exclamations from the miners.

"Ye'll hev ter keep yer eyes peeled, son, while ye're aroun' whar thet feller is," said an old miner.

"He's shore bad medercine."

"I'll be on the lookout for him," said Sam. "I was taken by surprise this time, for the reason that I didn't expect him to get after me so soon."

"He's one uv ther kind thet don't let ther grass grow under their feet, I reckon."

"It would seem so."

After a little more talk the three youths were shown to a room up-stairs. It was a fair-sized room, with one double bed and a single one.

"How'll this suit ye?" asked the landlord. The youths assured him that it was all right.

"Glad ye're satersfied. Waal, good-night."

"Good-night," they replied in chorus.

The landlord had placed the candle on a little table, and now he left the room, closing the door behind him.

Bob pushed the thumb-latch across and fastened the door, and then they began getting ready for bed. This did not take them long, and they were soon in bed and sound asleep.

They were up early, and ate breakfast, after which they went out and began looking around the town.

They found that there was nothing going on in a business way, for the miners were all away to work. When they spoke about the dullness of business on returning to the Palace Hotel, the proprietor nodded and said:

"Thar's nothin' goin' on in ther day-time. We mought jest about ez well shut up shop till arter supper, when ther boys comes in from work on their claims an' in ther mines; then things begin ter hum."

"We can't do anything in the entertainment line till then, either," said Bob.

"Not er thing," with a shake of the head.

"How much will it take to buy such mining implements as we will need for prospecting in the mountains, and for mining in the ordinary fashion?" queried Bob.

The landlord told them.

"But," he added, "et won't do ye youngsters enny good ter go prospectin', fur ye don't know nothin' erbout et, see? Ye wouldn't know a rich strike ef ye run onter one."

"Oh, I guess we would," said George.

"I don't think ye would, an' my advice ter ye would be ter git work right here, close ter ther camp, frum some uv ther experienced miners, at least till ye l'arn sumthin' erbout ther bizness."

But the youths shook their heads.

"We want to go it alone," said Bob. "We will risk not knowing a strike if we should make one."

The landlord shook his head.

"All right; suit yerselves," he said. "But ye're foolish, jest ther same."

Of course they would not tell him their real reason for wishing to go prospecting among the mountains. They did not want anybody to know they were searching for a cave of gold.

During the afternoon Bob, Sam and George went to the largest hotels and saloons and made arrangements with the proprietors to let them entertain the patrons and take up collections, and after supper they set out.

They visited four different places that evening and accumulated eighty-four dollars, which was not so very bad, they thought.

"We'll buy the tools to-morrow and set out for the place where we expect to look for the cave of gold," said Bob, when they were in their room. "What do you two say to that?"

"I'm in for it," said Sam.

"And so am I," from George.

So after breakfast next morning they went to an outfitter's store and bought picks, shovels, a revolver apiece, some ammunition and enough provisions to last them two weeks, at least, and clothes like miners.

As they came forth from the store with their purchases, they came upon Pretty Pete and Red Rollin.

"Hello," said the former; "goin' ter start out, air ye?"

"Yes," replied Bob.

"W'ich way ye goin'?" asked Red Rollin.

"Oh, up into the mountains," motioning toward the West.

"Waal, I hope ye strike et rich," grinned Pretty Pete. "Ye see, I don't bear no malice fur ther kick ye give me, young feller," to Sam. "I hed no bizness tryin' ter make ye drink when ye didn't wanter."

"That's all right," smiled Sam. "I'm glad you don't hold it against me."

"Oh, I'm er fa'r-minded feller, ef I do say et myself, whut shouldn't. I allers takes me medercine an' don't make no kicks about et."

Then the two miners shook hands with the three and entered a saloon, while Bob, Sam and George set out toward the west without any more ado.

Bob happened to glance back as they left the street, however, and he caught sight of the dark-faced villain, Eugene Carroll, who was standing in front of the Occidental Hotel, glaring after them.

He called the attention of the two to Carroll.

"He looks vicious, all right," said George.

"No matter," said Sam, carelessly. "We are leaving him behind, and so he won't get any chance to do us any harm."

"That's so," from George.

"Supposing he should follow us?" said Bob, a thoughtful look on his face.

"I guess there is no danger of that," said Sam; "and if he should, we would be three to one, and he wouldn't stand much show with us."

They strode onward at a moderate pace. They knew that they had quite a hard tramp ahead of

them, and that it would not be policy to tire themselves out at the start.

By the time they had walked three miles they were tired indeed, and they paused and placed their packs on the ground and sat down to rest.

"Say, that pack of mine weighs about a ton!" said George, with a sigh of relief as he put it down.

"Mine the same," said Bob.

"I think mine weighs about two tons," grinned Sam.

"They get heavier and heavier," said George.

"Well, we can take our time for it, and can stop and rest as often as we like," said Bob.

"Yes, that's so," from Sam.

They sat there perhaps fifteen minutes, and then rose and set out again.

Up and still up the mountain they toiled.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MYSTERIOUS VOICE.

At noon the youths paused and ate some of the food they had brought with them from the hotel, and after resting an hour, they again set out.

About the middle of the afternoon they came to a stop on a little plateau about two acres in extent. At the farther side there was a bluff, the wall of which was almost perpendicular and at least one hundred and fifty feet in height.

At one point there was a huge flat rock extending out from the face of the bluff at least a dozen feet, and almost below it were trees and bushes. There was just a nice space in between the bushes and the face of the bluff, and underneath the projecting rock, for a camp, and here the youths established themselves. The rock would serve as a roof to keep the rain off, and they would be snug as a bug in a rug.

"Unless we are very much at fault," said Bob, "the cave of gold must be within a mile of this spot."

"That's what I should say," said George.

"Say, it'll be like looking for a needle in a haystack," said Sam. "This is the roughest country I ever saw."

"You are right," agreed Bob. "I should judge that there are a thousand places within a mile of this spot where the cave might be located."

"Well, we'll find it if it's here," said George.

"We'll do our best," nodded Bob. "We can stay as long as we like, which is one good thing."

"Don't be too sure of that!" said a deep, sepulchral voice, coming from where not one of the three could determine.

They gave utterance to startled exclamations and looked all around them and up above.

Not a soul other than themselves was in sight.

"Where did that voice come from?" half-gasped George.

(To be continued)

Harold G. Lorang
Darien Center, N.Y.

NEWS OF THE DAY

GIRL WEARS LIVE SNAKE.

A brilliant colored yellow and black gopher 40 inches long is being used as a necktie by Miss Nellie Bradley of Los Angeles, Cal., who is now at Switzer's Camp in the Arroyo Seco. Miss Bradley thinks a great deal of her pet and cannot understand the aversion to her fad.

DOG SAVES TWO LIVES.

By saving the life of three-year-old Marie Duffey of No. 119 Somerset Street, New Brunswick, N. J., a collie dog, Nellie, escaped execution the other day.

The child's father had decided to kill the dog and was about to lead it away when the girl, leaning out of a third-story window to see him, fell. The dog ran toward the house. The girl fell on the dog and was uninjured, and Nellie was granted a reprieve.

THOUGHT POOR; HAD \$4,000.

John Wildman, eighty years of age, a farmhand, who died at Mercy Hospital, Tiffin, Ohio, was believed to be penniless. Investigation has shown that the old man's trunk at his employer's home in Eden Township contained a store of currency amounting to \$4,000. It is believed he has no heirs. Orlando Shepherd, his employer, has been named executor.

WOMEN TO DRIVE TAXIS.

A significant indication of the growing shortage of men chauffeurs is embodied in a recent advertisement of the Detroit Taxicab and Transfer Company of Detroit for women to operate their electric taxicabs, says a bulletin sent out by the Electric Vehicle Section of the National Electric Light Association. Women drivers would only be employed during the day, and are to receive exactly the same schedule of wages as the men. The advertisement said no previous experience was necessary. More than 500 women have applied for chauffeurs' positions, and several are already operating electric taxicabs with great success, the association reports.

FALSE LEGS FOR HORSES.

A new invention of artificial legs for horses and dogs was offered to the Philadelphia branch of the Red Star Animal Relief by a French-American veterinarian who refuses to disclose his name.

This man, who, since the war started, has taken twenty-one trips to Europe with horses for France, claims that although the horse or mule will no longer be good for active service, it may be used for light farm work if these legs are used.

The leg, or crutch, which has been used successfully in this country, is made of steel, with a special

quadrant spring imitating the vertical and lateral flexings of the ankle and fetlock. By means of this many crippled horses and mules, which would otherwise be killed, will be given a chance to live.

DOG DRIVES AUTO.

A big Airedale dog had his day recently and took advantage of his opportunity. In other words, he drove an automobile down the street during a hard rainstorm and stopped at the corner without an accident, while the owners of the car had sought refuge in a store near-by during the downpour.

The car was standing near the curb on a business street in Pueblo, Cal. The street sloped somewhat and the car was headed down hill. Two Airedale dogs were in the tonneau of the car, and tiring of the monotony of being "gentlemen," abandoned their good manners and began chasing each other about the car.

One of them jumped over the front seat and his paws landed on the steering wheel. The impact caused the wheels of the car to be turned from the curb and the machine moved down the street to the corner, where it was stopped, but not before the dog had "driven" it half a block.

FIRST U. S. FLAG ON FRENCH LINE.

In the little village of Potter Hill, Rhode Island, lives the woman who has the honor of having sent to Europe the first United States flags which were raised on the French front. Mrs. William MacDonald of Maxson street, Ashaway, forwarded several flags, with comfort bags and other gifts, to the boys at the front in France several weeks before war was declared with Germany. A letter of thanks received by her recently from a young British soldier tells the story of these flags and their significant fate.

The flags were hoisted by this soldier over his little army hut, close to the firing line, two days after President Wilson's proclamation of war against Germany. This was several days before the flag had been displayed by the Massachusetts soldiers, which was reported in the press despatches of this country to be the very first United States flats thrown to the breeze after war's declaration.

The young soldier who had received the Potter Hill flags was among the first to hear of the President's proclamation, and lost no time in raising the emblem of this Republic.

He writes: "Soon men from all along the lines swarmed about the hut like bees to a hive, to learn what was up and then to make sure if the news could be true, and being officially assured of the fact, took on new life, hope and courage."

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166 West 23d St., New York

Good Current News Articles

Hunting came high for Martin Pennet of No. 499 Summer street, Paterson, N. J., in the Clifton Police Court, when Judge Watterson fined him \$20 for each of twenty-five sparrows he trapped and killed—a total of \$500. In default of the fine Pennet will spend 1,000 days in jail.

The operators on the Hickel mine, south of Baxter Springs, Kan., recently went into a cave of lead. It was 35 feet long, eight feet wide and four feet high. Tons of pure lead were taken out of it. Pieces of the mineral measured from two to ten inches in thickness. This mine has yielded an unusual amount of pure cube lead.

The State Department has declined to grant passports to wives of army officers who expect to be in France indefinitely, says a Washington despatch to the New York World, in pursuance of a policy adopted by the department. It will, the despatch adds, issue no passports to women who desire to go to France or England unless they present proof that they are to be regularly employed in war work. Reports received in Washington indicate that there are entirely too many American women in the allied countries in view of the food shortage.

The Navy League announced recently that Mrs. George Dewey had consented to act as sponsor for the women who are knitting for the league and that hereafter gifts for the men and officers of the fleet will be presented in her name. As far as can be ascertained, Secretary Daniels will offer no objections to this plan. "Naval stations have received shipments of comfort articles sent in the name of individuals," says a statement issued by the Comforts Committee. "More than 23,000 sets of comfort garments have been distributed to men of the navy since the day Mr. Daniels first sought to cripple our work."

Grins and Chuckles

"If an empty barrel weighs 10 pounds, what can you fill it with to make it weigh 7 pounds?" "Have to give it up." "Fill it full of holes."

"I tell you, hearing those star opera singers on the phonograph is almost as good as hearing them on the stage." "Far better. You can shut them off whenever you like on the phonograph."

"Now, Willie," said the Sunday-school teacher, "can you tell me why Satan tempted Eve first?" "Oh, I suppose he wanted to be polite," answered Willie: "Ladies always come first, you know."

His Lordship—Prisoner, you have the right of challenging any of the jury if you desire to do so. Prisoner—Right y'are, guv'nor. I'll fight that little black-whiskered bloke at the end if he'll step outside.

The youngster had just been told the story of Daniel in the lions' den, and the question had been put to him: "What do you think Daniel did the very first thing when he found he was saved from the lions?" The child reflected a moment, and then replied: "I suppose he telephoned home to his wife to tell her he was all right."

The wise old doctor was talking seriously to his little patient. "My lad," he advised, "no matter what you eat, always chew each mouthful thirty times." But Jimmy shook his head significantly. "That wouldn't do at our house, doctor." "And why not, my son?" "Because I'd always be hungry. My eight brothers and sisters would clear the table before I got through with that one mouthful."

Statement of the ownership, management, etc., required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, of the "FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY," published weekly at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1917. State of New York, County of New York:—Before me, a Commissioner of Deeds in and for the city and county aforesaid personally appeared Luis Senarens, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of the "FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY," and that the following is to the best of his knowledge and belief a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443 Postal Laws and Regulations, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher—Harry E. Wolff, 168 West 23d St., New York, N. Y.; Editor—Luis Senarens, 168 West 23d St., New York, N. Y.; Managing Editor—None; Business Manager—None.

2. That the owner is Harry E. Wolff, 168 West 23d St., New York, N. Y.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company, but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona-fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds or other securities than as so stated by him.

LUIS SENARENS, Editor.
Sworn to and subscribed before me this 28th day of September, 1917.
Charles Warren Hastings. (My commission expires January 7, 1919.)

THE LANGLEY CASE.

By Ralph Morton

It was about two o'clock in the morning, and I was preparing to leave the office when there came flashing over the wire the information that a murder had been committed in Fifty-seventh street.

I went to the house, and after showing my badge was permitted to enter it.

The scene of the murder was in the library, which Mr. Langley, the victim, used to transact business in, and in one corner of which stood a large safe at the time I entered, with wide-open doors.

I searched the room carefully, and finally found, lying in one corner, where the assassin had probably thrown it after it had done its mission, the sandbag or club.

I approached the body.

It was lying half-turned to the right side. I turned it flat on its back, when something glittering in the right hand, which was tightly clenched, attracted my attention.

With difficulty I unclosed the stiffened fingers and took from the hand a little piece, of about three inches in length, of a peculiar pattern vest chain, the links themselves and their mode of connection being different from anything I had ever seen before.

"Ah, ha!" thought I, "here is something to work on, at any rate;" and after examining it I placed it in my pocket.

Hardly had I done so when a brother detective entered the room.

I soon learned that the chief had also sent him to examine into the circumstances of the case.

Mr. Langley's family were out of town, but being telegraphed to they arrived at their desolated home during the day following.

Mrs. Langley, after an examination, gave Perrin, the other detective, and myself a list of the articles missing, among which was enumerated a gold watch and chain.

The only clues to work on, then, were the sand-club and chain, and the latter no one knew anything about.

A month rolled around.

Meanwhile Perrin had given the case up in disgust.

As weeks passed, my mind began to conjure up in connection with the chain the short, squat figure of a blear-eyed, sandy-haired man.

Nine months had passed away since the night of the murder, and it was enwrapped in as profound a mystery as ever it had been.

Gradually hope dwindled, and I was almost in utter despair, when, chancing to drop into one of Water street's vilest dens, I came face to face with —him—the squat, blear-eyed, sandy-haired man.

I abhorred the taste of liquor, but I called every one in the room to the bar to drink with me, and under cover of this device I opened an acquaintance

with the individual—Tom Larkins he said his name was.

I had known him over two months, and had never yet been able to gain one word that bolstered up my conviction, and yet it did not waver.

At length, unable to stand the agony, I resorted to strategy and said in Larkins' presence that I would like to know where to buy a gold chain cheap.

"I guess I can fix you out. I pawned a chain at Isaac's nearly a year ago. If you are a mind to pay what is due on it you can have it."

"Give me the ticket and I'll go and see it," said I, with as little show of my anxiety as possible.

"I'll go with you," he replied, and at my suggestion we started for Isaac's without delay.

We entered the place; Larkins presented the ticket. After some delay, a long package was unrolled, a chain taken out and tossed on the counter before us.

Ye gods! but I was almost stunned, for there lay the companion pattern to the piece I held.

Summoning all my self-command, I examined it coolly, as if calculating its worth, but finally counted out the requisite amount, and placed it in my pocket.

Now that I had it in my possession, I was nonplussed what next to do.

Should I arrest him?

"Not yet," said common sense. "You haven't proof enough."

It was agonizing to let Larkins go out of my sight for even a moment, but I allowed him to do so, and then, when alone by myself, I compared the two portions of chain.

They were alike, exactly so.

But the chain stolen from the murdered man had been a neck chain, and this was a short, ordinary length vest chain with a bar.

I went to dozens of plated gold goods manufacturers, and at last found a firm who acknowledged the goods as being one of their patterns and make.

"Yes, we made that," said the senior member of the firm. "It is one of a few dozen; we discontinued making them because the pattern didn't take well."

"Can you furnish me with a list of the parties who did buy them?" I eagerly asked.

They did so, and off I started.

In one shop, way over on the East Side, I found a jeweler who still had a bar like it.

After some conversation I asked if he had any neck-chains.

Professing to be dissatisfied with what he exhibited, I remarked, as I laid the Langley chain on the case:

"There is a pattern I like very much, and should like a neck-chain of the same pattern. Could a piece be made like it?"

"Curious," musingly said the man, "but I believe I have a piece of chain of the same pattern."

Going to his safe he produced and showed me a counterpart of the Langley chain.

I led him to tell me how he came in possession of it.

A man had come, short in figure and sandy-haired,

with a long chain, which he wanted divided, as he wanted to use one piece as a bar chain, while he was willing to dispose of the other.

"Did you know the man?" I asked.

"No."

"Would you know him if you saw him?"

"Yes."

"Well, don't part with that piece of chain for love nor money. I'll see you again before long;" and I hurried out of the place.

The links in the chain of evidence were complete.

I hurried to the Water street den where I had first seen Larkins, and there I found him hobnobbing with some companions, among whom I noticed several strange faces, one of which, however, seemed somewhat familiar.

"Here's to you, Jack Sly," said Larkins, raising a glass of liquor to his lips, "and my best hopes that you will not get nabbed again."

Jack Sly.

I knew the man instantly; through my instrumentality he had been sent to Sing Sing for four years, and dating back in my memory I knew that he had been released but that very morning.

In my feverish excitement, although at the time I did not know it, my disguise had been somewhat shifted and ill-fitting.

Suddenly I saw Sly, who had happened to get a good look at me, bend and whisper to his companion, and then I found myself the center of observation, and presently overheard these words spoken in a voice not intended to reach my ears:

"I tell you I'm right; it is Detective Clark, the one as sent me to the jug. Give me a chance, and I'll bust his head beautifully."

It was Sly who spoke.

"I tell you, Sly, old hoss, that he's my pard, and on the square," replied Larkins, whom I had completely deceived.

"Only look at his hair," said Sly.

My wig had become displaced, and showed my own locks beneath.

"My heavens!" ejaculated Larkins, the truth rushing upon him. "I must get out of this. Don't let him foller me, boys!"

He arose to leave by the back door.

My time had come; the danger was great, but I was not going to be cheated of my game after running him to earth.

I rushed forward, clasped him on the shoulder, saying:

"You are my prisoner!"

"Never!" he shouted; then quickly drew a pistol, pointed it at my head, and fired.

The bullet gashed my scalp and carried away a furrow of hair.

I knocked the pistol from his hand.

"Help me, pards!" he shouted.

I gave him a toss in one corner, and holding him there I drew my revolver, and presenting my front to his companions, I shouted:

"Advance one foot, and I'll shoot you like dogs!"

My attention, directed to those in front, gave Larkins an opportunity of drawing a huge, murderous knife, which he plunged into my side.

He attempted to break away, but I held on like grim death, and yelling for help I fired my revolver, shot after shot, in rapid succession.

There came a tramp of feet outside, the door, which had been locked, was burst in, and at the last moment, while I was wildly struggling with my prisoner, several bluecoats entered.

I had secured my prisoner, or rather did secure him with the policemen's aid, snapped on the handcuffs, and, buoyed up by the excitement, I made my way to headquarters with him.

You can imagine the uproar that greeted me, the presumed dead man, when I walked into the Central Office with my prisoner.

Arrived there, I learned how weak I really was; but a surgeon soon bound up my wounds and placed me on my pins. I visited Larkins' habitation, and while there discovered that a piece had been cut from the ticking of his bed.

It afterward proved that this sand-club had been made from the missing piece.

He was placed on trial.

The jeweler came forward and identified him as the man who had sold him a portion of the chain a few days after the murder.

The unwilling pawnbroker of whom I had got the other portion was forced to testify that Larkins had pawned it.

The bed-ticking and sand-club were placed in as evidence, and altogether the case was so strong that the jury returned a verdict of murder in the first degree, and Larkins afterward suffered the full penalty of his crimes.

Such ware as was not destroyed, of the fruits of our joint burglary, was returned to its owner.

Although I received a slight reprimand for having concealed the piece of chain, the end attained had been such a good one that it occasioned no ruffled feelings whatever.

I received a large reward offered for the capture of the murderer, besides taking a jump from the lowest to the highest rank in the profession.

And now as to my imagination having drawn so faithful a picture of the actual murderer.

I can only call it a sympathy of mind, psychological effect, not to be explained until psychology is better understood than it is.

A good object lesson in freight saving comes from Louisville, Ky. James M. Buckner, of that city, had sold 40,000,000 pounds of tobacco to the French government, but was unable to get freight cars for shipping it to New Orleans. Water transportation was substituted, several river packets carrying the tobacco to the Gulf at New Orleans. He furnished his own ocean transportation by buying three sailing vessels to carry the tobacco to France.

FACTS WORTH READING

FELL IN MARKED BILL TRAY.

Reginald Van Nostrand, a clerk in the Sag Harbor, L. I., post-office, and said to be of one of the best-known families there, was indicted in the Brooklyn Federal Court on the charge of robbing the mails in taking a \$10 note from a letter addressed to the Sears-Roebuck Company, Chicago.

Van Nostrand was arrested the other night by Inspector Brown and Leamy, who had been tracing thefts from the mail. They put a marked note in a letter which they handed to Van Nostrand just as the mail was being made up.

When the letter was found on the train between Sag Harbor and Bridgehampton without the money, the inspectors returned to the post-office, searched Van Nostrand and say they found it in his clothes.

MAN ESCAPES DEATH IN 160-FOOT PLUNGE.

Andrew Lashinsky, a rigger, working on the roof of Philadelphia's big city hall, escaped death by an almost miraculous circumstance.

A scaffold on which he was working 160 feet from the ground broke and he fell head first. Sixty feet down, a single one-inch rope from another scaffold hung like a hangman's noose. By a spectacular trick of fate, one of Lashinsky's flying legs went into it and drew the noose tight. His fall was stopped with a jerk and he hung, head downward, swinging in space.

The man managed to swing himself back and forward till he found a resting-place on the ledge of a window not big enough to permit him to get inside the building. Workmen tore away the window sides and pulled him to safety.

WHY SOLDIERS WEAR WRIST WATCHES.

Replying to a question from his audience, a British officer lecturing in Chicago explained why all officers wear wrist watches. He described an advance from the trenches as an illustration, telling how every move was made on a prearranged schedule, the artillery throwing a curtain of fire for a certain number of seconds, while the infantry advanced twenty yards, then lifting it to twenty yards further ahead, while the infantry made another advance, and so on.

"All this shell fire," he said, "is being done by artillery far behind. The artillery officer depends most of all upon his watch. He sits with a telephone glued to his ear and field-glasses in his hands. He has no time to be fumbling for his watch. A minute's error in changing the range would mean that the shells would be falling into his own advancing troops. Nor has the officer leading his men across No Man's Land any time to be fumbling for his watch."

GET THREE CROPS OF BROOM CORN IN TEXAS.

Harvesting three crops of broom corn from one planting in a single season, the yield from each cutting being about one ton to the acre of broom corn, is what is being accomplished in this section of the lower Rio Grande Valley this year.

The average price received for the brush, which is used in the manufacture of high-grade brooms, is \$310 per ton, or a total of \$930 per acre. In this region, which only a few years ago was a wilderness of mesquite trees and prickly pear, situated more than 100 miles from the nearest railroad outlet, there is being rapidly developed the greatest broom corn growing industry in the United States.

There is being grown here this season 40,000 acres of this product and the extremely high prices which dealers are paying for the brush are bringing fortunes to many farmers. The fact that the growing season is practically continuous throughout the twelve months of the year makes the possibilities of the industry unusually attractive.

The first planting is usually made in January, and as rapidly as one crop is matured it is cut and from the stubble there is quickly produced a second and third crop. All of the broom corn in the valley territory is grown by means of irrigation.

BEARS LIKE BERRIES.

That bears like blackberries has long been known; but the fact was proved to the entire satisfaction of Elias Peterson and John Larson of Highland, Pa., while they were out picking berries in the vicinity of Maple Run, last month. Peterson and Larson left their home early in the morning with two ten-quart pails each to pick berries. They had both succeeded in filling one pail when the lunch hour arrived and they decided to eat.

Selecting a shady spot under a small tree they seated themselves on the ground and ate their lunch, after which they decided to leave their well-filled berry pails under a log near by while they picked enough berries to fill their other pails.

About four o'clock in the afternoon they succeeded in getting their other two pails filled, and started to the spot where they had eaten their lunch and left their full berry pails. They reached the scene, and to their complete surprise discovered an old female bear and two large cubs eating the berries they had left under the log.

Peterson, badly frightened, let out a yelp, following which the old bruin turned around and growled at the two men, who dropped their pails of berries and started running home.

Both men returned to the forest the following day to get their pails, but found three of them empty and about three quarts of berries in the fourth.

ARTICLES OF ALL KINDS

BARNACLES ON SHIPS.

One of our big warships was brought into dock the other day for a cleaning. Two hundred men worked all day scraping off 600 tons of animal and plant growth from its sides and bottom. This tremendous quantity of sea life had accumulated in less than two years, during which time the ship had traveled many thousand miles, says Popular Science. The weight of the barnacles was so great that from 25 to 40 per cent. extra coal was consumed in maintaining the vessel's speed.

NEW WAX FOR CANDLES.

From prehistoric times the Indians of Ecuador have utilized a wax found on certain species of tall palms for making candles. This wax occurs on the tree trunks in granular form, each tree furnishing about 50 pounds. The trees grow in great numbers on the mountains along the coast. Samples of this wax were sent to France and to Germany before the war, and the chemists in both countries made favorable reports, but the war terminated further negotiations. One chemist stated that it could be used in the manufacture of explosives.

BIRDS FLY HIGH.

An officer of the French Flying Corps has taken exceptional opportunities to record observations on the flight of birds and the height at which they fly, especially when migrating. Some of his notes are published in the Pall Mall Gazette. Swallows, he says, seem to prefer an altitude of 2,000 feet, whereas the wild duck usually flies at 5,000 feet. They are remarkable also for the marvelous uniformity with which they follow their leader. The turns and twists are taken with such simultaneity that a flock appears to turn and wheel automatically, so extraordinarily together do they move. When climbing they fly at about sixty-five miles an hour, and are good for seventy once they have got their height and have spread out to let themselves go.

Last March he met some plovers at 6,500 feet, which is the highest altitude that he has seen a company of birds.

VINEGAR COMES HIGH IN NEBRASKA.

Confidence men are gleaning much real coin in this territory since the dry law took effect. One slick-looking stranger stopped at a farm home near here and showed the man of the place several samples of what he persisted in calling vinegar of a very fine character.

When he said "very fine character," he winked at the farmer and told him to take a drink at his ex-

pense. The sample "vinegar" was none other than a fair quality of whisky.

When the farmer ordered several gallons of the "vinegar," he had to sign a paper which said so and so much vinegar had been sold to so and so, and that it would come to the depot at such and such a date.

Came the day for the arrival of the booze. Many farmers in the vicinity made trips to the depot. "Vinegar" seemed to be at a premium.

When the casks had been tapped and contents sampled, it was found that the stuff was vinegar, and that the fellows had paid several dollars for each gallon of something they might have bought from their home merchants for a few cents per gallon.

No arrests have been made, since the sharks are well within the law. They sell vinegar and vinegar is delivered.

DID MEN LIVE 900 YEARS?

When reading of people who lived long years ago and especially when reading about the length of their lives, we are told that in the old days people lived longer than they do now. Some of the early historical records speak of single individuals who lived hundreds of years. There is great doubt as to whether these statements are founded on fact. In thinking about this we must first take into consideration that these records of long ages were recorded at a time when men had no accurate ideas of the actual passage of long periods of time, such as a year. They did not have our calendar as a basis for figuring at all. Learned men now tell us that the actual age of men who lived at the time these records of great ages were recorded probably lived shorter lives than we do now, and that what they record as a period of one year was probably a much shorter period than one year, says the Book of Wonders.

It is true beyond the question of a doubt that the people of to-day live longer on the average than people who lived ten, twenty or more years ago.

In other words, the average period of life has increased steadily. This is due to the fact that we have taken great care of our bodies; have improved the conditions in which we live, and made them more sanitary; have learned to fight and check and eradicate diseases which only a few years ago we could not prevent people dying of when they once contracted them, and we know from the records which we keep that actually people live longer on the average to-day than only a few years ago, and it is safe to say that they live longer now on the average than at any time in the world's history.

POCKET SAVINGS BANK.

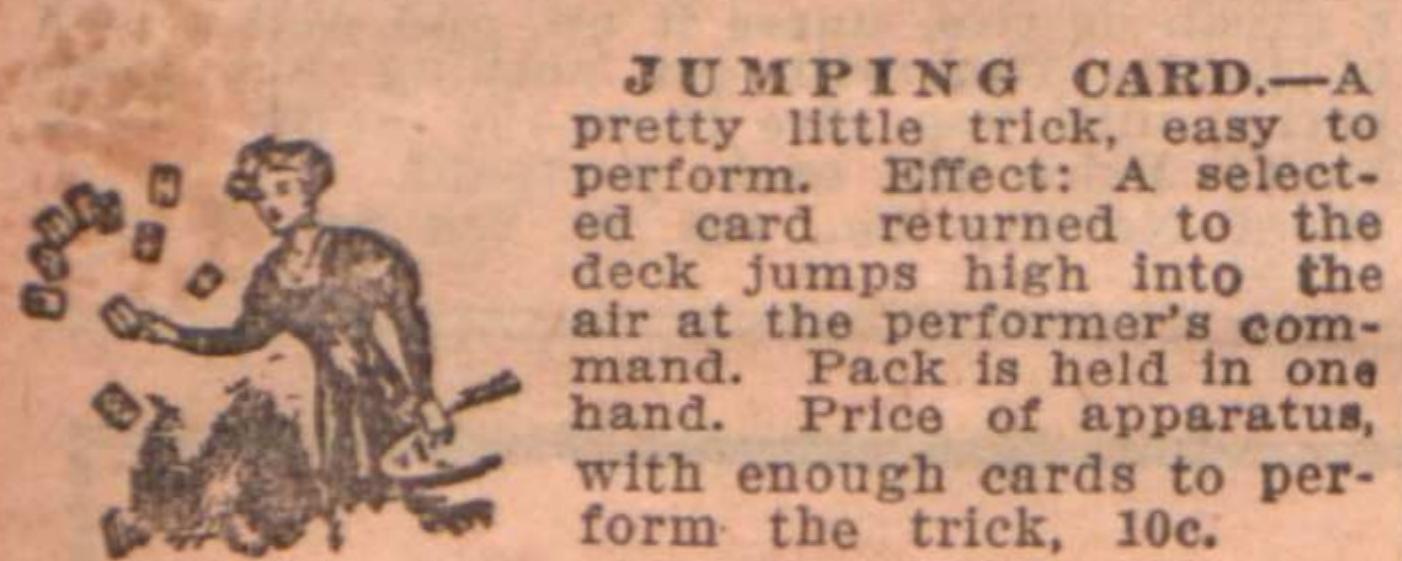
A perfect little bank, handsomely nickel plated. Holds just five dollars (50 dimes). It cannot be opened until the bank is full, when it can be readily emptied and relocked, ready to be again refilled. Every parent should see that their children have a small savings bank, as the early habit of saving their dimes is of the greatest importance. Habits formed in early life are seldom forgotten in later years. Price of this little bank, 10c.; 3 for 25c., mailed, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d Street, N. Y.

IMITATION BED BUGS.

This toy is an exact imitation of the friendly little fellow who shares your bed, eats out of your hand or leg and who accepts your humble hospitality even without an invitation. The fact that he also insists on introducing all his friends and family circle, sometimes makes him most unpopular with the ladies; most every woman you know would have seven kinds of fits if she saw two, or even one, of these imitations on her bedspread. Six are contained in a transparent envelope. Price, 10c. by mail.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.



FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

THE TANTALIZER PUZZLE.

Consists of one horizontal and one perpendicular piece of highly polished metal bent in such a manner that when assembled it seems utterly impossible to get them apart, but by following the directions it is very easily accomplished. This one is a brain twister. Price 10c. by mail, postpaid, with directions.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d Street, New York City.

SECOR SPARKLER.

Hold discs in each hand and twist the strings by swinging the toy around and around about 30 times. Then move the hands apart, pulling on the discs and causing the strings to untwist. This will rotate the wheel and cause the sparks to fly. The continued rotation of the wheel will again twist the strings. When this twisting commences slacken the strings slightly until they are full twisted, then pull. Price 25 cts. each by mail, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d Street, New York City.

MAGIC PUZZLE KEYS.

Two keys interlocked in such a manner it seems impossible to separate them, but when learned it is easily done. Price 6c. by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

**STAR AND CRESCENT PUZZLE.**

The puzzle is to separate the one star from the linked star and crescent without using force. Price, 10 cents; 3 for 25 cents, by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

MYSTERIOUS PLATE LIFTER.

Made of fine rubber, with bulb on one end and inflator at other. Place it under a table cover, under plate or glass, and bulb is pressed underneath, object rises mysteriously; 40 inches long. Price 25c., postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

CACHOO AND ITCH POWDER.

As Itch powder, Cachoo and Bombs are unavailable, we cannot accept orders for less than One Dollar's worth of an assortment. They can be sent by express only, on which we will prepay the charges.

WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

GREAT BURGLAR PUZZLE.

The latest and most fascinating puzzle ever placed on the market. Patented May 30. It consists of four revolving dials, each dial containing 16 figures, 64 figures in all. To open the safe these dials must be turned around until the figures in each of the 16 columns added together total 40. The puzzle is made on the plan of the combination lock on the large iron safes that open on a combination of figures. Persons have been known to sit up all night, so interested have they become trying to get each column to total 40, in this fascinating puzzle. With the printed key which we send with each puzzle the figures can be set in a few minutes so as to total 40 in each column.

Price 15 cents; mailed, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

THE ELK HEAD PUZZLE.

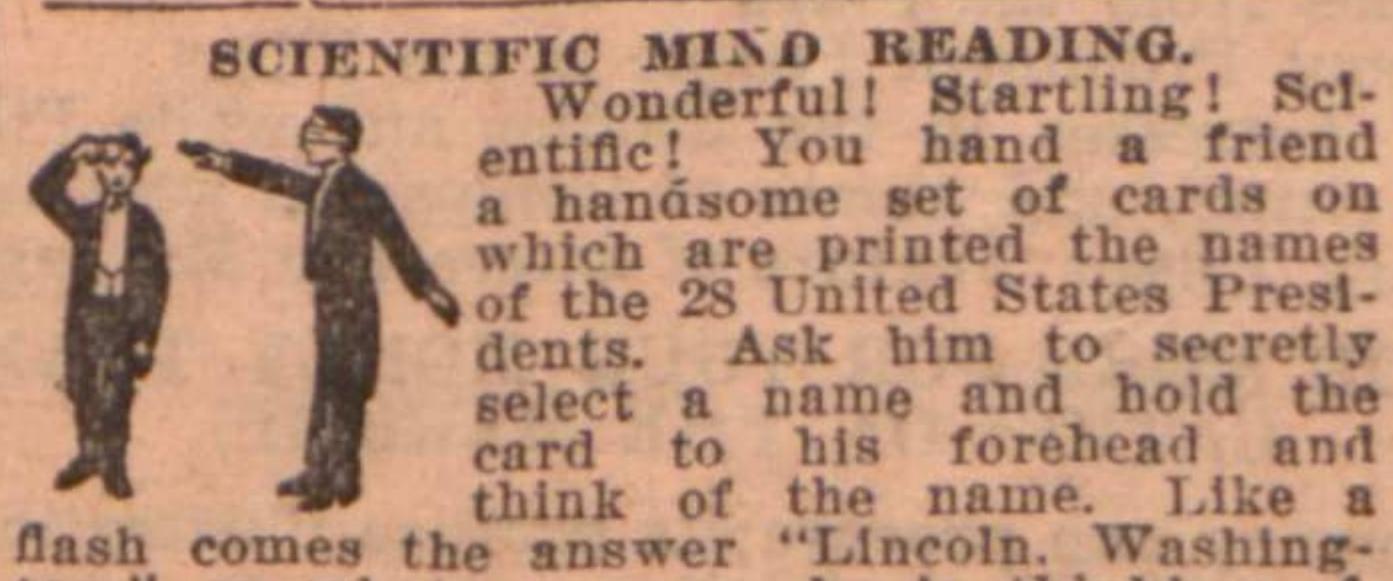
Just out and one of the most fascinating puzzles on the market. The stunt is to separate the antlers and rejoin them. It looks easy, but try it and you will admit that it is without exception the best puzzle you have ever seen. You can't leave it alone. Made of silvered metal. Price 12c.; 3 for 30c., sent by mail, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d Street, N. Y.

**THE SPIDER WEB PUZZLE.**

A very interesting little puzzle. It consists of a heavily nickled plate and brass ring. The object is to get the ring from the side to the center and back. This is very hard, but we give directions making it easy. Price, 10 cents each, by mail, postpaid.

FRANK SMITH,
383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.



SCIENTIFIC MIND READING. Wonderful! Startling! Scientific! You hand a friend a handsome set of cards on which are printed the names of the 28 United States Presidents. Ask him to secretly select a name and hold the card to his forehead and think of the name. Like a flash comes the answer "Lincoln, Washington," or whatever name he is thinking of. The more you repeat it the more puzzling it becomes. With our outfit you can do it anywhere, any time, with anybody. Startle your friends. Do it at the next party or at your club and be the lion of the evening. This was invented by a famous magician.

Price, with complete set of cards and full instructions, 12 cents, mailed, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d Street, New York City.

BE A MAGICIAN.

Make money go through a lead-pencil. Other sleight-of-hand and card tricks, with cards and instructions, for 10 cents.

F. RASCH, Midas, Nevada.

\$ 2 to \$500 EACH paid for hundreds of old Coins. Keep ALL money dated before 1895 and send Ten cents for New Illustrated Coin Value Book, size 4x7. It may mean your Fortune. CLARKE COIN Co., Box 95, Le Roy, N. Y.



Boys Look At Me Do you want to know how to find tell stories girls like to hear, write real love letters and be a dandy fellow with the girls? Write quick for Lovers Casket giving sample letters, and lots of other good things. All 10c. AMUSEU Co., 1945 Fremont Ave., S, Minneapolis, Minn

Boys and Girls Earn Christmas Money Send for 25 XMAS PACKAGES. Each pack containing 48 assorted Xmas seals, Cards and Tags. Sell for 10c. each. When sold send us \$1.50 and keep \$1. We trust you.

CHRISTMAS CARD CO., Dept. R, Beverly, Mass.

WILLARD-JOHNSON PRIZE-FIGHT PUZZLE.

Four strips of cardboard, each three inches by one and a half inches, showing Willard and Johnson in various absurd postures. The solution in the puzzle lies in arranging the strips that they show Willard in the complete picture, the heavyweight champion. Price, 10c., by mail, postpaid, with directions.

FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

RUBBER SUCKER.**Rubber Vacuum Suckers**

The latest novelty out! Dishes and plates will stick to the table, cups to the saucers like glue. Put one under a glass and then try to lift it. You can't. Lots of fun. Always put it on a smooth surface and wet the rubber. Many other tricks can be accomplished with this novelty.

Price, 12 cts. each by mail, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d Street, N. Y.

GOOD LUCK GUN FOB.

The real western article carried by the cowboys. It is made of fine leather, with a highly nickeled buckle. The holster contains a metal gun, of the same pattern as those used by all the most famous scouts. Any boy wearing one of these fobs will attract attention. It will give him an air of western romance. The prettiest and most serviceable watch fob ever made. Send for one to-day. Price 20 cents each by mail postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

**BLACK-EYE JOKE.**

New and amusing Joke. The victim is told to hold the tube close to his eye so as to exclude all light from the back, and then to remove the tube until pictures appear in the center. In trying to locate the pictures he will receive the finest black-eye you ever saw. We furnish a small box of blackening preparation with each tube, so the joke can be used indefinitely. Those not in the trick will be caught every time. Absolutely harmless. Price by mail 15c. each; 3 for 25c.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d Street, New York City.



THE WAR FOUNTAIN PEN.

A very handsome fountain pen case to which is attached a pocket holder neatly made of metal and highly nickel-plated. When your friend desires the use of your pen and gets it, he is very much astonished when he removes the cap by the sudden and loud noise of the explosion that occurs, and yet a little paper cap does it all. Price, 35c, by mail, postpaid. FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

JITNEY BUS GAME.

A circular metal box with a glass top. Inside is a tiny garage fixed at one side and a loose traveling little Ford. It requires an expert to get the swiftly moving auto into the garage. This one grabs your interest, holds it, and almost makes you wish ... you find after repeated trials how hard it is to do the trick. Price 12c, by mail, postpaid. WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

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Made of nicely colored wood 5½ inches long. The power is furnished by rubber bands. Ten discs of cardboard with each pistol. Price, 6c. each, by mail, postpaid. WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

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The most comical fortune telling cards ever issued. Every one a joke that will arouse screams of laughter. They are shuffled, and one is drawn—red for ladies, white for gentlemen. On the drawn card is a mirth-provoking picture, and a few words revealing your fortune. Price 5c., sent by mail, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d Street, N. Y.

THE KAZOO.

Made in the exact shape of a submarine. With this comical little instrument you can give a bride and groom one of the finest serenades they ever received. Or, if you wish to use it as a ventriloquist, you will so completely change your voice that your best friend will not recognize it. Price, 12c, by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

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A number of rings. The scheme is to link them together just exactly the same way magicians link their hoops. It looks dead easy. But we defy anybody to do it unless they know the secret. Price 10c, by mail, postpaid. WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

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We have here one of the greatest little novelties ever produced. With this instrument you can absolutely test the strength of your lungs. It has an indicator which clearly shows you the number of pounds you can blow. Lots of fun testing your lungs. Get one and see what a good blower you are. Price 15c, by mail, postpaid.

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